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THE LAND AFAR OFF.

BY C. J.

A land wherein bleak winter doth not reign,
But always summer, sweet unto the core;
Where broken hearts are knit in love again,
And weary souls shall wander out no more;
Where bliss is greater for all woe before;
Where fair flowers blow, without earth's sad decay,
And friendship's happy voices, as of yore—
But tenfold dearer—ne'er again shall say
"Farewell"—but ever "Welcome to this shore!"
Or, "Hail, tired pilgrims, to this golden day!"
And, "Come ye blest, to joys which will not pass away!"

A country in whose light our souls shall bask;
A goodly heritage—where all we sought
Of hope and love, and every pleasant task
Shall centre gladly—far beyond all thought!
And He, the Lamb—who from all evil bought
His chosen people—shall our eyes behold,
And graciously, as when on earth He taught,
His voice shall speak again—clear, as of old,
But with no ring of sorrow in its tone;
Glad presence, walking in the streets of gold!
A mighty King, with people all His own!

FOR MONEY'S SAKE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WHICH WINS," "THE SQUIRE'S LEGACY," "A PRINCE IN DISGUISE," "RED RIDING HOOD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.

CYNTHIA GRAY'S position was not an easy one just now.

She concluded, when she came to think about it, that she must live with somebody; even her simple-mindedness scarcely encouraged her to go about the world alone, yet she longed to free herself from the society of Kate.

The only plan she could form was to go and live very quietly in the country in a little cottage.

Surely, she thought, a chaperon would be unnecessary at such a place as Porlock Weir!

For, in the midst of the ruins of her dream, her thoughts turned hungrily back to that place where she had learned to dream.

She fancied it always April at Porlock, always warm, the air sweet with the faint scent of innumerable primroses. To her lingering fancy the primroses would be there whenever she returned; and there too would be her hero.

For he lived still, dissociated for ever from Eric Vavasour.

She tried to believe that she thought only of Orlando, of Claude Melnotte, of Benedick, that these romantic figures were what engaged her heart.

But secretly she knew it was not so. She had not all the nature of her heart; but she was a thorough woman.

She told herself that she would buy one of the few peasant cottages which help to form the village of Porlock, and would there live surrounded by the things she loved—the sea, the sky, her flowers, her books.

At last she determined to speak to cousin Kate.

For some time there had been little conversation between them.

Ever since the scene about Eric Vavasour Cynthia had preserved silence as far as possible.

Until she had some decided plan to propose discussion was dangerous.

Since Vavasour's visits had ceased, Mrs. Vane had been more ceaselessly desirous for society than ever, and more irrepressible when in it.

Cynthia alone saw her in her moods of depression.

These she had always had, but not frequently; now they always appeared as soon as there were no distractions.

Cynthia wondered what was in her cousin's mind when she fell into those deep abstractions and gave such heavy sighs. Was it regret that her bold experiment, the daring effort of a desperate mind, had failed so utterly?

She had no means of ascertaining the reason for Vavasour's sudden desertion of her; Cynthia offered no explanation, and no one else could do so.

All the world still believed Mrs. Vane herself to be the fortunate possessor of ten thousand a year.

Cynthia had a vague hope that her cousin was suffering from some pricks of conscience as to the use she had made of her part in what Cynthia had called their little comedy.

If this were so, thought Cynthia, it would make it all the easier to suggest that the farce should finally come to an end.

For herself, she was longing to leave London.

The round of social life had lost all interest for her; she felt herself isolated amid it all.

The sudden wreck of the heroic figure which she had adored had left a wound in her heart that would take some time to heal.

Above all other tasks of the day, she most disliked the visit to Lord Ayrtoun's studio. She felt as if he had snatched her secret from her when he found her in the conservatory; she knew that he had told her his.

She gave him no chance to speak any further word to her; she dreaded his saying more.

For she had a sick disgust of all love-making since she had learned how false it may be.

It was not that she imputed Vavasour's faults and follies to all its sex, but rather that her heart was too tender to bear any touch.

She would have been amazed could she have seen the many letters Lord Ayrtoun wrote to her and then burned; he had not the courage to send them after they were written.

Her studied avoidance of him made him dread to seal his fate; he felt that he would be refused.

Indeed, as the days passed and no glance or word of encouragement came to him, he began to feel that his suit was a hopeless one.

At last it became evident that Lord Ayrtoun had done all he could with his figures.

"I must work up the background now," he said one day, when Cynthia was sitting for him.

"Then I may leave town?" she asked.

"I can do no more to the Rosalind," he replied; then added angrily—"Where shall you go?"

"I do not know," answered Cynthia slowly, turning her eyes upon Mrs. Vane.

Lord Ayrtoun took the answer to mean that she did not care for him to know; and his face clouded.

"We'll go over to Paris for some seaside and mountain dresses, and then be off to the places where there's sure to be lots of people," said Mrs. Vane, looking up from the book. "That's my idea. I dare say Cynthia would like to go and bury herself alive in some country place where we'd have to divide the curate between us. It's a regular fixed notion of hers that she likes to be in the country; it's all a mistake, she'd be ill in a week. So this is the last sitting, is it? Well, I am thankful! Come, Cynthia, we'll be off to Paris to-morrow or next day. It will be a luxury to get out of London, any way."

Mrs. Vane yawned as she finished her chatter.

She was very tired of always "keeping up the conversation," and "being amusing"—this was how she described her noisy nonsense.

Now she had no especial admirer to lay herself out for, and she missed Vavasour bitterly; and now that she realized that he was indeed gone from her altogether, she began to long for some new field of action.

At *tables d'hote*, in the free-and-easy life of hotels and steamers she knew by experience that it was not difficult for a woman with her "dash" to form a little current of her own.

It was far easier to find a host of admirers away from the centre of English society than in it.

And, with Cynthia's ten thousand a year to use, what a figure might be made! They could travel like princesses or *prima donnas*.

In imagination Mrs. Vane already saw herself standing on the steps or in the verandahs of various hotels which she well remembered, all eyes upon her as the best-dressed woman in the place. Men always found some way of making acquaintance with her, it looked so easy. But if they were shy, she was quite ready to take the initiative herself.

After all, she reflected, though she had failed in her principal aim during this London season, there were wide fields and pastures yet to explore.

The thought gave a little new life to her jaded feelings.

Perhaps she might meet with a much better match than Vavasour would have been.

"No one knows what can be done till they have tried," Mrs. Vane reflected. "With my appearance, and the reputation of having ten thousand a year, I may pick up a young fellow with money, or even a title, as well as good looks. After all, it would not have been an easy task to get on with Vavasour. He hates work, and I should have had to be always urging him on, or he would have made no figure in the world."

She yawned over this mental conclusion of hers, as if the very thought of it were a weariness.

They dined alone that evening; and naturally the subject of their future movements came under discussion.

"I intend to stay in the country, at all events, till the summer is over," said Cynthia, "in some place so quiet that I cannot want a chaperon. So you will not have to give up Paris or the French watering-places, in order to be with me. I would not ask you to bury yourself alive for the world!"

As she spoke, a faint color came into her cheeks; she felt that her voice was less kind than her words. Mrs. Vane looked up at her with a sudden sharp glance, such as Cynthia had never received from her before.

"Oh, stuff and nonsense, Cynthia!" she said, with a sort of tentative good-humor. "This is all moonshine dreaming of yours. If you love the country, well, you shall have it. Only come abroad with me."

"I would rather not," returned Cynthia quietly. A second after she added decisively, "No, I am resolved not to go with you."

"Oh, then there's no more to be said!" rejoined Mrs. Vane. "May I ask what you are going to do?"

"Take a cottage in a little country village carry my books there, and pass some months of quiet."

"One can be quite anywhere, if one likes to shut oneself up. The fact is you have had enough of my society," said Mrs. Vane unconsciously hitting the truth.

"I have a solitary fit on me, I confess," replied Cynthia.

She dropped her head and gazed at the plate before her with fixed attention for a moment; then she looked up again and spoke.

"Before we go away, I should like to put this house into the agent's hands."

Mrs. Vane stared at her.

"Gracious me! What for?" she said at last.

"Because I should like to get rid of it. I don't want to come back here. I don't care to come to London next season. I am tired of the whole thing."

A strange hard look came on Mrs. Vane's face, and she began to breathe more rapidly.

"Look here, Cynthia," she said, in a rougher voice than Cynthia had ever heard her use before—"speak out. I can't stand insinuations and hints and all that sort of thing. Do you want us to separate altogether?"

"I think," returned Cynthia quietly, "that we have acted our parts long enough; it is time we resumed our own characters. I no longer fear fortune-hunters; I am not likely to be persuaded into marrying one."

"All right," said Mrs. Vane; "do as you choose. I'm sure I'm sufficiently tired of the way we've been living here together. I'm sure it's like living with a stone; you've never a word to say. Don't forget that I've put up with it all this time for the sake of doing my duty by you. I've introduced you to society; I've taken you everywhere. That you've not made a good match in this season isn't my fault. You're a born old maid. However, that's neither here nor there. Look after yourself for the future, if you like, though it does seem a strange thing for a girl like you to go about the world with ten thousand a year, and nobody to look after it or you. But if you throw over the only friend you have, why, you must expect you'll be chiselled and cheated by your tradesmen and servants, and made love to for your money. It don't matter what people say, of course. I'm sure I don't care, if you don't. It's all the same to me!"

She threw herself back in her chair, with a gesture meant to intimate that the subject was exhausted.

Cynthia rose from the table. There was a dangerous gleam in her eyes; but she preserved her coolness.

"Then it is settled," she said. "The house shall be let, and the furniture sold. I shall go down perhaps to Porlock, with my maid; I mean to buy some cottage that pleases me, and make it my home. And whenever you come to see me, cousin Kate, you will be welcome."

So saying, she swept out of the room.

* * * * * *

The next day Cynthia Gray left London, alone, with her maid.

She was longing for fresh air, country sights and sounds, quiet—above all, freedom.

The cousins shook hands in the hall at parting, and with that a phase of Cynthia's life was over.

She left the household affairs to be wound up by Mrs. Vane, in whose name they had been set going.

Cynthia knew that they would soon come to an end, now that her cheque-book was no longer within Mrs. Vane's power of appeal, but was safely locked up in her own traveling bag.

She went straight to Porlock Weir. It seemed to her as if some re-awakening of her dead dream must come to her in this place.

It was lovely as ever in the hot sun of the late summer.

Cynthia thought it even more beautiful than when she had seen it first. The wide gleam of the sunlit sea, the thick shade of the heavy green woods, the fragrance and sweet saltiness of the air—above all, the dignity and calm of the serene summer, thus far removed from the frivolities of Piccadilly—all filled her with delight.

Her heart rebounded beneath these happy influences.

Her youth re-asserted itself.

She took up her abode at the little hotel, and then wandered about in search of a cottage which should please her fancy. She found one at last, bought it, and paid the tenant to go out.

From that moment Cynthia Gray became another being.

She was absurdly happy.

The idea of having this cot to herself, right amid the woods, yet on the verge of the sea filled her with delight.

She engaged workmen from the nearest town to put the cottage in order in the briefest time possible.

She sent to London for furniture, and for her books.

She had the plot in front of the windows, hitherto devoted to cabbages and onions, converted into a wilderness of flowers.

The whole thing was a ceaseless source of amusement to the villagers, who collected in the evening on the opposite side of the way to smoke their pipes and shake their heads.

But this small circle of critics did not disturb Cynthia much.

There were very few of them, and they went very early to bed.

Her maid was even more amazed than the villagers; but she was a sober woman who had outlived the follies of youth, and she did not dislike the idea of temporary retirement.

Moreover, she had attached herself to Cynthia, who was the gentlest, as well as the most generous of mistresses. So she took up her abode with her in the tiny paradise contentedly enough.

It seemed to her a very quaint amusement for a young lady with a fortune to live in a place where she could not spend more than a few hundreds in a whole year.

It was about a fortnight after Cynthia was fairly installed in her cottage that one day she came upon something in the woods which for a moment startled her.

It was a big white umbrella.

There was an easel and evidently an artist.

Cynthia was passing by without making any further observation, when the artist started from his seat and came towards her.

It was Lord Ayrtoun, and it seemed to Cynthia that he was blushing.

"I am so awfully glad to see you!" he said.

"You here!" exclaimed Cynthia, in complete surprise. "How very odd, and yet—no, of course it is not odd. You are here to finish your background. How stupid of me not to think of it!"

"Why should you?" asked Lord Ayrtoun humbly. "There was no reason for you to think of it."

"Did you know I was here?" asked Cynthia.

"Yes," acknowledged Lord Ayrtoun, with a sort of guilty manner; "Mrs. Vane told me she thought you had come here; and at the hotel they talk of nothing but Miss Gray and her cottage. Do you like it?"

"I am perfectly happy," answered Cynthia, with a smile of content. "I have everything I want, except a dog."

"A dog!"

"I must have a dog. I believe I shall go to town on purpose to get one."

"What sort of a dog do you want?" asked Lord Ayrtoun.

"I don't care; only he must be very big and ridiculously good tempered. I want him to walk with me. It gets too quiet sometimes quite alone. May I look at the picture?"

A long time she sat and looked at it, and then rose with a sigh.

She said nothing; and there was a look in her eyes which kept Lord Ayrtoun silent.

With a brief good-bye, she shook hands and went on her way.

"She did love that Vavasour, I believe," said Lord Ayrtoun to himself, when she had disappeared from sight.

He did not settle to his work when she had gone, as he should have done. Her face continually came between his eyes and the canvas.

At last he started up again.

"I can't go on like this!" he exclaimed aloud. "I must put an end to it."

He threw a cloth over his picture, and then hurried down the path to the low ground where the hotel stood. His servant was taking the air in front of the coffee-room window, leaning against the rustic fence, with a blade of grass in his mouth.

As he was wont to say, after the fatigue of the season he needed country air every bit as much as his lordship.

"Pollock," said Lord Ayrtoun, "I want you to drive over to Minehead and take the next train up. You are to fetch Sultan and come back at once."

Pollock was much amazed at this order; but he received it with professional coolness.

All he said was—

"Is he to travel in the dog-box, my lord?"

"Now look here, Pollock—don't be ridiculous. You know he couldn't be got into it. And on no account will I trust him to the guard—remember that. Sultan is to travel in a first class carriage. It doesn't matter what it costs; take a compartment, if you like."

"Yes, my lord, I understand. Shall I wait to fetch your easel and picture in?"

"No: I'll bring them home myself. Start immediately."

Pollock touched his hat and went into the inn, while Lord Ayrtoun strolled back to his painting.

But he found it impossible to become absolutely absorbed in his work.

He was continually expecting Cynthia's white dress to gleam through the trees, or to hear her voice.

But though he sat later than usual, she did not re-appear.

She had gone home, then, some other way to avoid him.

He packed up his easel and umbrella, and walked home laden like a beast of burden.

The next morning he carried up his materials very early, and set to work with some success, for he knew there was little probability of Cynthia's wandering into the wood until later in the day.

It was not until the afternoon that he had seen her the day before; so he fixed his attention on his picture, and gave but occasional glances at the turn of the path.

When he went down to the inn at lunch-time, he found Pollock standing in the hall, beside him an immense St. Bernard dog. The moment Lord Ayrtoun came to the gate Sultan began to rub affectionately against his master's legs, and to inspect him all over with careful snuffings.

Lord Ayrtoun took out a visiting-card and wrote on it—

"If he is big enough, will you accept him?"

This he attached to Sultan's collar.

"Take him up to Miss Gray's cottage, Pollock," he said, "and leave him there. Say I have sent him to Miss Gray."

Cynthia had gone for a long ramble, not through the woods where Lord Ayrtoun was but in the opposite direction. She did not exactly intend to avoid him, but she feared meeting him alone.

She had seen words trembling on his lips yesterday which certainly would be spoken if they met to-day.

And the strongest thing to her that a vague uncertainty had arisen in her mind as to what her answer would be.

She had that uncertainty as to what she might feel, what she might say, which is one of the most singular sensations of our complex nature.

She recognized that her heart had a will and a way of its own which her mind could not order or regulate, nor could she forsee what wanderings that way might lead her into.

In this confused mood, she felt that she was safest alone.

When she came from her walk, she saw something which surprised her.

Sultan was sitting in the porch, almost filling it.

While she was gazing at him in astonishment, her maid saw her, and came to the window of the little parlor.

"I can't come out, miss," she said, "and, I don't see how you're ever to come in. I'm sure I daren't go near the great beast! Lord Ayrtoun's man tied him up there, and there I suppose he must stop."

"Lord Ayrtoun's man?" echoed Cynthia, in a tone of inquiry.

"Yes miss the great animal is a present to you. I should like to know where he's to sleep! Pollock says he's never lived out of doors; so he mustn't sleep in the garden. Couldn't you board him out at the hotel, miss?"

Cynthia opened the gate and walked up to Sultan.

"Shake a paw," she said offering her hand.

With great gravity and deliberation, Sultan raised his great paw and gave it to Cynthia.

"That's all right," she said. "We're friends."

She loosed him from his chain, and, in so doing, found the card attached to his collar. A faint flush came into her face.

"Certainly he is big enough," she said, with a smile; "and he's a beauty!"

"Well, I confess I'm afraid of him," said the maid, "though Mr. Pollock did say he is good-tempered. And he is a beauty, that's true, miss! Mr. Pollock told me he had taken three hundred pounds in prizes."

"Oh, indeed!" returned Cynthia thoughtfully, regarding her new companion as he stood in the middle of the parlor. "I must have some lunch directly," she said suddenly. "I am going out again. I don't see how Sultan is to get in the dining-room; but he can try."

The cheerful sound of plates and dishes brought Sultan straight into Cynthia's tiny dining-room.

After sharing her meal with him, Cynthia put on her hat again, taking him by the collar, started out towards the woods.

Sultan evidently felt that he must wear his best company manners when walking with a lady, and Cynthia was charmed with his gentle society.

As they entered the shade of the woods, her breath came faster and her color rose. It could not be because they were mounting a hill, for Cynthia was an excellent climber.

At last they came within sight of the white umbrella.

Sultan gave a little appealing whine, and tried to lick Cynthia's hand; she guessed what he wanted, and loosed her hold of his collar.

With a couple of great bounds, as it seemed to her, he reached Lord Ayrtoun's camp, and nearly upset the whole affair in his delight.

Lord Ayrtoun rose and came to meet Cynthia, with a look on his face which she did not very well understand. He was afraid she was angry; but she could not guess that.

"Will he do?" he asked humbly.

"Oh, he is glorious," exclaimed Cynthia—"you know he is! I never dreamed of such a dog when I talked of something big! But Lord Ayrtoun, you must only lend him to me now and then; let him come to me as a visitor."

"You will not accept him?" said Lord Ayrtoun, in a sort of despair.

"How can I?" she answered. "He is too valuable. Besides, how could I part him from you when he loves you so?"

They were walking slowly, side by side, on the turfy way which served for a path through this sea-scented woodland.

"Will you take me and the dog too?" exclaimed Lord Ayrtoun, after a second's pause. Then he stopped short and added, "For pity's sake, Cynthia don't refuse me! I can't bear it! What a fool I am not to keep silence! I know you are going to refuse me. Don't let me hear the words in your voice—the sound would haunt me all my life! Don't say anything and I will go away!"

He turned on his heel, and began to walk away from her down the path. Something in his voice had brought the tears to Cynthia's eyes.

For one second she stood still and watched him going away from her; and then he felt a light touch on his arm.

He stopped, and turned, to meet her lovely eyes all wet with sudden tears. Her lips were trembling.

"Don't go!" she said.

* * * * * *

"What do you think of Lord Ayrtoun's picture?"

"Not bad for an amateur. Why these fellows with enormous rent-rolls must rush into all the arts and professions nowadays passes my comprehension."

"Oh, well, he'll do artists no harm in this case! He won't sell that picture, you may be certain."

"And why not? Does he mean to give it to the National Gallery?"

"He will keep it. The Rosalind is a portrait of his wife, and I must say I never saw a more admirable representative of Shakspeare's most delightful heroine!"

"Indeed! I must look at it again. I understand the Orlando is a portrait of young Vavasour."

"So it is; and I confess it seems to me bad taste to put him on the same canvas with Lady Ayrtoun."

"Oh, but he's a great friend of Lord Ayrtoun! Last season they were always about together."

It was the private view of one of the summer exhibitions.

The "Scene in the Forest of Arden" attracted a great deal of attention, partly because, although by an amateur, it was really a good picture, and partly because of the portraits.

For Eric Vavasour was still the bright particular star of the stage and Lady Ayrtoun was considered one of the loveliest women in London.

It was her own fault that she was not a fashionable beauty.

Everybody turned to look at her, when, late in the afternoon, she walked through the crowded rooms.

She was with her husband's mother, who nodded and smiled graciously to her acquaintances, and looked about through her eye-glasses; they made her shorter-sighted than ever when she met with people she did not care to know.

They served her this trick as she passed Mrs. Vane, who had returned to London in order to make the utmost out of her old intimacy with Cynthia, now that she had become a *grande dame*.

Mrs. Vane had reminded Cynthia that she it was who had introduced Lord Ayrtoun to her, and played chaperon during their courtship.

Cynthia, with a smile, assured her she would never forget it; and she pacified and pleased her cousin Kate by asking her to certain of her dinners.

But she could not persuade her mother-in-law to acknowledge "that dreaded Mrs. Vane," as the old lady always called her.

"Well, my dear," said the old lady as they paused in front of the "Scene in the Forest of Arden," "I know it's the fashion to be painted and have your portrait exhibited nowadays; but the fashion doesn't please me. Still I must say Harry has done his work well. But I'll never forgive him for painting you with Mr. Vavasour—he is a clever actor, I have no doubt; but he is such a dreadfully vulgar young man!"

Cynthia stood silent a moment, looking at the picture which had been a part of all her love-life.

Then she spoke very softly.

"But there is magic in those woods!" she said. "In this scene he is Orlando, the young hero of romance. Art is generous in granting us such illusions! Is it possible to forget, when one sees the face there, as when one sees it behind the footlights, that it belongs to the common-place Mr. Vavasour of every day."

As they turned away, they came face to face with Eric Vavasour himself.

He bowed low, but made no attempt to speak.

He was afraid of the old lady, who never would smile on him; he was still more afraid of Lady Ayrtoun, whose smile seemed to him to have a sarcasm in it. His soul sensitive to little else, was keenly alive to ridicule.

[THE END]

Pitching Peas.—A soldier was brought to Alexander to exhibit a trick which he had acquired of pitching a pea into a distant hole, which just fitted it;—when the reward which the great conqueror bestowed upon the soldier for his useless application of time was a peck of peas.

A Strange Bargain.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

"LOTTY. Where's Lotty Chelford?"

It was nine o'clock of a dreary, drizzly February night, when Mrs. Chickwood the fashionable dressmaker, whose boast it was that she had carriages two deep in front of her establishment half the day, thrust her head into the workroom where her nine pale girls bleached, in the close, unwholesome air.

"Gone to put on her things to go home, ma'am," responded Etty Fane, the one who happened to be nearest the door.

"Well, tell her to come back, then," said Mrs. Chickwood, imperiously. "I want to speak to her."

So Lotty Chelford came back, a tall, slender girl, with two red spots in her cheeks, and dressed in the most ancient of darned and shabby black silks, with cheap ruffles at her throat and wrists.

She might have been pretty if her color had been brighter and her eyes less heavy; as it was, she was what one would pronounce "a genteel-looking young person."

"Lotty," said Mrs. Chickwood, "I meant to have told you before; here is this dress of Miss Marquindale's to be altered and sent home by eight o'clock to-morrow morning. It isn't much—only the overskirt to be taken off and replaited, and fresh bows of *moire antique* put on the corsage, and the flounces altered so as to hang lower behind. She left it this morning—and she's off for W—— to-morrow; so you see it's got to be done."

"To-night, Mrs. Chickwood?"

"Of course to-night."

"But I shall have to sit up all night," remonstrated the girl.

"I can't help that," said Mrs. Chickwood, fretfully. "What a commotion you girls do make about being put out a little. One would think the world was coming to an end when you are asked to do a little extra work."

"But, Mrs. Chickwood——"

"There, that will do," said the head of the establishment, with a lofty toss of her cap ribbons. "Of course, if you are unwilling to execute my requests, I can easily obtain some young woman in your place, who ——"

Lotty Chelford's face flushed painfully.

With her the alternative meant starvation.

"Give me the dress, Mrs. Chickwood," she said. "It shall be finished."

"And mind," added the heartless *modiste*, "let me hear nothing about extra work. You've had almost nothing to do here since Tuesday morning, and there was a quarter of a day you were absent with the toothache in December."

"It was only two hours, Mrs. Chickwood."

"Well, at all events, it spoiled Miss Harper's bridal dress, you being gone that afternoon, and Lois Brown's cutting the gores all wrong; so you owe me something."

And Mrs. Chickwood went back into her room, where she was planning a new spring hat from the lilac satin she had "scrimped" out of one of the dresses on a wedding order.

And Lotty Chelford, with the rich robe carefully folded in an oiled silk bag and wrapped in many papers, set off for her lonely walk under flaring gas lamps, and against the teeth of fog and rain.

"Oh, the curse that poverty is," she murmured, as she caught sight, now and then, through blinds, of luxurious homes and pretty girls, no older than herself, with roses in their hair and dresses that gleamed like silver. "Oh, the grinding wretchedness of daily life. If I could only escape for just one week—one day—one hour."

But Lotty Chelford knew that this was impossible.

In an evil hour she had borrowed a little money of her imperious employer hoping soon to be able to replace it, but the "soon" had never come.

Mrs. Chickwood was not the gentlest and most tolerant of creditors, and Lotty felt the galling yoke.

She went home to her room.

It was small and cheerless, and dark, even at the brightest noonday, its one window opening on a blind wall, but indescribably desolate at night with its fireless hearth and uncarpeted floor, and Lotty sat down with a sigh to the work, which was likely to last her until well into the small hours of the morning.

It was a lovely sea green *moire antique* trimmed with rich white lace, caught down with beads of pearl; and Lotty had all a woman's instincts of delight in handling the soft shining stuff of which the dress was composed.

Miss Marquindale was a rich man's only child.

Miss Marquindale wore such every day, and walked on carpets, and dreamed away the sunny hours in blessed indifference as to whether the rest of the world worked or not.

Why, the poor sewing girl asked herself, should there be such a difference between Miss Marrion Marquindale and poor Lotty Chelford?

As she ripped apart the gleaming folds, she felt something in the pocket, a lace-bordered handkerchief, and something else crumpled up into the bottom of the pocket as if thrust there and forgotten.

A twenty-pound note.

How the blood leaped into Lotty's cheek as she saw it.

Freedom from Mrs. Chickwood's grinding creditorship—rest—recreation.

A breathing spell for weak limbs, aching back, and tired brain.

That was what it meant to her, not merely the commonplace pounds.

Miss Marquindale had forgotten all about it, and would, in all probability, never miss it.

To her it was but a drop in the bucket of gold.

To poor Lotty Chelford it was a mint of money.

For a minute or two the temptation was very strong.

For a minute or two Lotty resolved to avail herself of this piece of good fortune so manifestly intended by Providence for her benefit.

And then she came back, as it were, to herself.

No, a thousand times, no.

Better poverty, self denial, toiling drudgery for the rest of her days than to lose the self-respect which was all she had left in the world.

She put back the note with a sigh, and went on with her work.

If only that hundred dollar note were her own by right, what a mine of treasure it would be.

If—oh, what was the use of idle "ifs?"

And Lotty resolved to think no more.

Her wearied fingers plied the needle till, fairly worn out, Lotty fell asleep on her chair.

Brief as was the rest she obtained, yet it still somewhat refreshed her, and shaking off her drowsiness, she again set to work, striving to banish all thoughts of the note from her mind, and stifle the temptation it presented to her.

By daylight the dress was finished.

Lotty Chelford folded it neatly up once more, and lay down, dressed as she was, on the bed, to snatch an hour or two of slumber before it was time to take it home.

"Is Miss Marquindale at home?"

"Yes, she's at home," said the man servant in plain clothes. "Is it a bundle? I'll give it to her maid."

"That will not do," said Lotty, with quiet dignity. "I must see Miss Marquindale myself."

Muttering some not very civil commentary on the "himperence of tradespeople as thinks there ain't no one in the world but themselves," the man summoned Miss Marquindale's maid, and that elegant young personage led the way, somewhat reluctantly, to Miss Marquindale's own boudoir, a beautiful little circular apartment, all pearl-gray and gold, with curtains of the softest opal silk, and a white velvet carpet covered with silver-green fern leaves.

A fire blazed in the grate, and, luxuriously reclining in a low chair, sat Marion Marquindale herself, wrapped in a book, while in the adjoining apartment all the confusion and turmoil of packing for a journey was going on.

"Who is it?" said Miss Marquindale, glancing up. "What is wanting?"

She spoke kindly, but in the mechanical way in which she might have addressed a machine.

"Your dress, Miss Marquindale. From Mrs. Chickwood's."

"Very well. Give it to my maid."

"But that is not all, Miss Marquindale. This was in the pocket."

And she handed Miss Marquindale the lace-edged handkerchief and the crumpled note.

Marion took them, scarcely comprehending at first.

"Oh," she said, with a sudden intelligence drawing over her face, and a curious questioning look. "And you found them?"

"Yes."

"I should never have known that had I lost the money."

Lotty smiled faintly.

"I thought it likely that you would not, Miss Marquindale."

"Yes; and why didn't you keep the money, then? It would have been so much clear gain."

"I was sorely tempted to do so, Miss Marquindale.

"But—I am only one of Mrs. Chickwood's hands, at so much a week—but I could never have looked myself in the face again after that.

"Will you please to give me a line to prove to Mrs. Chickwood that the dress has been sent in time?"

"No," said Marion, bluntly; "sit down. Tell me your name."

"Charlotte Chelford. They call me Lotty for shortness, at the dressmaking rooms."

"Then I will call you Lotty, too. You are very pretty; did you know it?"

Lotty colored a little.

"I was pretty once, I believe," she said, "but the atmosphere of Mrs. Chickwood's workrooms doesn't conduce much to good looks, to say nothing of sitting up of nights for extra work."

"Do you often do that?"

Lotty nodded.

Miss Marquindale opened her big black eyes.

This was a new revelation to her.

"You shall not do it any more," said she. "Lotty, how much does Mrs. Chickwood pay you?"

"Four dollars a week."

"I'll give you twice that to come here and be my companion—read poetry to me when I am in the humor, and alter my dresses when I'm not.

"I daresay I shall be prodigiously cross and capricious, but I can't very well be more so than that Mrs. Chickwood. I've heard [illegible] all the girls behind the scenes when I have been there waiting. Will you try it, Lotty?

"I like your soft blue eyes and your gentle ways, and this little slip of paper"—with a glance at the note—"is sufficient evidence that you are honest. Will you try it?"

"But I cannot earn eight dollars a week, Miss Marquindale," remonstrated Lotty, to whom it seemed a fabulous income.

"I'll see that you earn it, fast enough," said Marion, shrugging her shoulders.

And so Lotty Chelford accepted the terms of this strange bargain.

To her advantage.

Miss Marquindale was odd and capricious but she had a wonderful degree of perceptive genius, and she found out that pale, quiet Lotty was a treasure in her way.

And from a dependant, Lotty rose to be Miss Marquindale's favored companion and friend.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Chickwood, "what luck some people do have. And I, for one, could never see anything remarkable in that girl."

As for Lotty, she thought she had found her way inside the gates of Paradise.

"I should have died of consumption if I had stayed at that dressmaking," said she. "God help the other poor souls who have no pathway of escape opened to them!"

The Sailor's Warning.

BY HENRY FRITH.

"STAY a bit, my lass; don't yer be off in such a huff. It ain't because you won't listen to my love that I warn yer agin Joe Winter: he is a rare handsome chap—just the sort a gal would take to; but he's a bad 'un, and——"

The sailor stopped abruptly, for Ellen Dent would hear no more.

Tossing her head defiantly, she replied, "Go it, Will! you are that jealous you can't say anything bad enough of Joe.

"Ah! my man, you ain't fit to hold a candle to him.

"Look at your nasty coarse hands! Why, his hands are as soft and white as any gentleman's, and he can show a sovereign for every shilling of yours!"

"Right yer be; but the way Joe earns his money ain't good, and I'd have yer say 'No' to him when he asks, 'Will yer marry me?'"

"Thank you for nothing. Will Clarke! You've got your answer, and pretty plainly too; so don't say another word."

But Will loved the girl dearly, and though she had just scorned his love, he determined to make one more effort to dissuade her from having anything to do with Joe Winter.

So he said, quietly, "Say a kind word, Nell, to an old friend, and wish me a good voyage."

"What!—are you off again? I am sorry," cried Nell, for in her heart there was a warm place for brave, tender Will Clarke, who had been her devoted admirer ever since they were children.

"Indeed, all the village looked on Nell and Will as engaged, until Joe Winter set up his wonderful draper's shop, and began courting pretty Nell.

"I am off on Thursday, and as yer won't look at a coarse sailor, why, I'd like never to set foot in the village agin."

"Not even to dance at my wedding?" jeered Nell.

"If you marry Joe Winter, you'll be the wife of a thief and a smuggler, for he is both, and the shop is only a blind to deceive the coastguard and the bobbies. The girls who run up from the barges and steams to look at his cheap dresses belong to his gang, and carry yards of lace and silk about them."

Nell looked frightened.

She knew Will was incapble of a lie, and for a moment she determined to give up Winter, but visions of future grandeur rose before her, and with temper she replied, "A quick voyage to you, Will, and may you return less spiteful.

"If only I knew when you would be back I'd be married then, so that you could drink my health and wish me happiness."

Nell turned away, but Will followed her and said, sternly, "I'd rather lie fathoms down in the sea yonder, than wish you happiness with such a man.

"Where I may be when the wedding comes off I don't know, but if coming back from the dead would stop it, I'd come."

Before the next night all the village knew that bonnie Nell and handsome Joe were to make a match of it in a few months.

Winter seemed highly elated at his good fortune in securing Nell, and her nest-egg of forty pounds left her by her late mistress, for Nell had been dairy-maid up at the Hall, and the old lady had made much of her in her lifetime, and had not forgotten her in her will.

Joe admired his future wife, and thought he could make her useful in his trade, but as for love, he did not seem capable of such a passion.

Nell, dazzled by Joe's "elegant manners" failed to notice any defect in him, and, in spite of many warnings, agreed to be married in October.

Poor Will during his voyage to Calcutta thought much of Nell, and wondered if she would find out Joe's real character in time to prevent the wreck of her life and happiness.

The voyage to Calcutta had been a quick one, and Will reckoned to be back again some time in October.

Before setting sail on the homeward voyage, a little boy of five years old was placed under the captain's care, who knowing Will's fondness for children, asked him to see to the child.

Bertie speedily attached himself to Will, and the two became inseparable.

"If Bertie fell into the sea, would Will pull him out?" inquired the little fellow, one evening, as his friend put him to bed.

"I'll always look arter the little 'un as sure as my name is Will Clarke!" replied Will, earnestly, as he lifted the boy into his berth.

Very soon was he called upon to protect Bertie, for whilst in the English Channel the ship encountered such a heavy gale that she foundered, and the crew, who escaped, had to take to the boats.

Will and the boy were trying to get to the boats when the ship sank, and they were left struggling in the water, fighting against the merciless waves.

It was too dark for the men in the boats to see them, and, knowing that, Will seized the first plank which drifted near him, and secured his charge to it.

Then, being a good swimmer, he made for shore, pushing the plank before him.

It was Nell's wedding-day.

She had taken her husband for "better or worse;" she had begun a fresh chapter in life, and given herself to a man utterly unworthy of her.

In the midst of the dancing and gaiety Nell gave many a thought to faithful Will, and recalled with a shudder his words about her wedding—"If coming back from the dead would stop it, I'd come."

The gale increased in fury, and the waves dashed with greater violence against the rocks, which made the coast a particularly dangerous one.

Joe had been drinking freely, and for the first time revealed himself in his true character.

He told Nell of what his trade consisted, and rejoiced in the gale which would keep the coastguard busy, and allow of the removal from his cellars of various contraband goods.

Seeing his wife's look of dismay, Winter seized her by the arm, saying, "Come, now, none of that!

"I married you for the help I mean you to help our gang in disposing of our goods. Put your bonnet on now, and let us be off home; there is work for us to do."

The merriment and feasting had taken place at the inn, for Joe wished "to do the thing in style."

As the party broke up, and were wending their way along the exposed road at the top of the beach, they met a procession on its way to the inn.

Several men were bearing a heavy burden between them, and on inquiring, Winter heard it was two bodies just washed ashore.

Some uncontrollable impulse made Nell stop and ask to have the faces uncovered, when, by the flickering light of the lanterns, she saw the pale face of her dead friend, Will Clarke.

Too late to stop the marriage; Nell was bound to the smuggler, and no dead hand could sever her bonds.

Nell did not faint or cry, but after gazing at the lifeless form of Will, she glanced at the other, only to see a little boy in what seemed a placid sleep, one hand locked in the sailor's.

"Eh, eh! he did his best for the little 'un,' said one of the fishermen; "but the waves, must have dashed 'em agin the rocks, and stunned poor Will, so that they both got drowned there."

The sea had helped Will to keep his word, for after tossing the lifeless forms to and fro in hideous play, the waves laid them on the beach, where the fishermen found them.

As weeks passed, the villainy of the man she had so foolishly married was more clearly revealed to poor Nell, until at last, worn out by his cruelty, she fled, leaving no trace of her whereabouts.

Shortly afterwards, Joe Winter was shot in an encounter with the coastguard, and the superstitious fisher-folk declare to this day that ill luck attends every newly-married pair if they meet a corpse during the first year of their wedded life.

Some go so far as to say that every 14th of October two spectators are seen in the churchyard, and that one resembling a sailor tries in vain to draw off a ring from the fingers of the other spectre, who bears a strange likeness to Nell Winter.

* * *

RULES FOR WINTER.—Never lean with the back upon anything that is cold. Never begin a journey until the breakfast has been eaten. Never take warm drinks and then immediately go out in the cold air. Keep the back—especially between the shoulder blades—well covered; also the chest well protected. In sleeping in a cold room, establish the habit of breathing through the nose, and never with the mouth open. Never go to bed with cold or damp feet; always toast them by a fire ten or fifteen minutes before going to bed. After exercise of any kind never ride in an open carriage or near the window of a car for a moment; it is dangerous to health and even to life. When hoarse, speak as little as possible until it is recovered from, else the voice may be permanently lost, or difficulties of the throat be produced. Merely warm the back by a fire, and never continue keeping the back exposed to heat after it has become comfortably warm. To do otherwise is debilitating. When going from a warm atmosphere into a colder one, keep the mouth closed so that the air may be warmed by its passage through the nose, ere it reaches the lungs. Never stand still in cold weather, especially after having taken a slight degree of exercise; and always avoid standing on ice or snow, or where the person is exposed to a cold wind.

Bric-a-Brac.

CAGLIOSTRO.—This was the assumed name of Joseph Balsamo, an Italian (1743—1795), one of the most impudent and successful impostors of modern times.

RUST AND STEEL.—A recipe for the removal of rust from steel with the least abrasion is to rub sweet oil well into the affected parts, leaving it for forty-eight hours, at the expiration of which time the article is to be well rubbed with finely-pulverized unslaked lime.

ACCOMPLISHED MONKEYS.—In the south of Abyssinia the monkeys are taught several useful accomplishments. One of these is that of officiating as torch-bearers at a supper party. Seated in a row on a raised bench, they hold the lights until all the guests have departed, patiently awaiting their own supper as a reward for their services. Occasionally an obstreperous animal will interrupt the festivities by throwing his lighted torch among the guests, but he is promptly caned into submission.

THE BARBER.—Chinamen regard their barber as a heavenly being, and will never allow anyone else to shave them. These un-Americanized Celestials who still reverence the man of the strop and are unfortunate enough to live in Baltimore, however, have lately found their faith put to a severe test by the disappearance of the only native barber in town. Nevertheless, at a recent meeting several of them resolved to go unshaven rather than put themselves in peril of being talked to death by an American barber.

SIBERIAN MARRIAGES.—Marriage for those who live in the Siberian mines has peculiar features. When a prisoner desires to undertake it the only thing necessary for him to do is to send in an application to the overseer, who forthwith allots him a wife. Three days of probation are then allowed, and if any incompatibility of temper seems likely to arise the applicant may receive twenty-five lashes and another wife. This process is continued until he gets a wife to suit him.

ANTS.—These insects were formerly used as a cruel instrument of torture by South African tribes, who tied their victim to a tree, smeared his body with grease, and placed an ants' nest at his feet. The Arabs place an ant in the hand of a newly-born child, that the virtues of the insect may pass into the infant. Naturalists also sometimes make use of these industrious scavengers. When they require a perfect specimen of the smaller vertebrates, they place the body in a box, bore a few holes in it, and bury it near an ants' nest; in a few days a perfect and most delicately whitened skeleton will be found in the box.

POLITENESS.—The city of Lucknow is renowned for the politeness of its people, exceeding, it would seem, that of the French who are generally regarded as the most polite people in the world. A correspondent, writing from the spot, gives a ludicrous illustration of the extent to which the natives carry their ideas of courtesy. Two native gentlemen, on their way to the railway station, accidentally fell into a ditch. One would suppose that both would have been on their feet in a twinkling; but no, the law of politeness interfered, and one said to the other, "When your honor rises then I may get up." "No, your honor should get up first," replied the other. "Never; how could I take precedence of your honor?" So they argued for hours.

PLANTS AND SPIDERS.—Ladies who have the care of house plants will do well to remember that human tissue is as good a resting-place for red spiders as the tissues of plants. Probably it is better, being warmer. They seem to burrow like ticks under the cuticle, and increase amazingly. A lady whom the writer knew had occasion to remove from one part of her house to another a dracæna which must have been loaded with spiders. The leaves came across her arm and shoulder; some touched her neck and face. After this she was annoyed with something like a sharp bite of insects, but finding nothing where she thought she was bitten, and not dreaming of the cause, she was much perplexed. She half fancied that the old time persecution by witches had come back, or that she had some new disease. Finally she appealed to science, and the microscope revealed on her neck and shoulders little colonies of red spiders, apparently happy and in a flourishing condition. She vibrated energetically between parlor and bath-room for a few days, and at length announced total extermination.

ROBIN HOOD.—Robin Hood was believed to possess supernatural powers. In the parish at Halifax is an immense stone or rock, supposed to be a Druidical monument, there called Robin Hood's penny-stone, which he is said to have used to pitch with at a mark, for his amusement. There was likewise another of these stones of several tons weight, which the country people would say he threw off an adjoining hill with a spade, as he was digging. At Bitchover, whose it was said he lived, among several groups of rocks, were some stones called Robin Hood's Stride, being two of the highest and most remarkable. He obtained also the distinction of sainthood, in having a festival allotted to him, and solemn games in honor of his memory. These games were celebrated till the latter end of the sixteenth century, not by the populace, but by kings and princes, and grave magistrates in Scotland and in England; being considered in the former country of the highest political importance, and essential to the civil and religious liberties of the people; the efforts of government to suppress them frequently producing tumult and insurrection.

LATE AUTUMN.

BY WHITTIER.

O'er the bare woods, whose outstretched hands
Plead with the leaden heavens in vain,
I see, beyond the valley lands,
The sea's long level dim with rain.
Around me all things, stark and dumb,
Seem praying for the snow to come,
And, for the summer bloom and greenness gone,
With winter's sunset lights and dazzling morn atone.

Then let the icy north wind blow
The trumpets of the coming storm,
To arrowy sleet and blinding snow
Your slanting lines of rain transform.
Young hearts shall hail the drifted cold,
As gayly as I did of old ;
And I, who watch them through the frosty pane,
Unenvious, live in them my boyhood o'er again.

And I will trust that He who heeds
The life that hides in mead and wold,
Who hangs you Alder's crimson beaks,
And stains these Mosses green and gold,
Will still, as He hath done, incline
His gracious care to me and mine ;
Grant what we ask aright, from wrong debar,
And, as the earth grows dark, make brighter every
star !

TWICE MARRIED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE NEMESIS OF LOVE," "BARBARA GRAHAM,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.—[CONTINUED.]

THEY were merely a leather pouch and a fusee-box, but they had a name written in them that was hardly needed to prove their identity, and they brought a fearful conviction to the father's heart.

"I saw him myself," continued Harper. "It was about midnight, or a little later. He was at the very spot where I found these, and he was stooping down, with his face almost to the ground.

"I heard a hoarse neigh, and the moon shone out enough for me to see your black mare tied to the bridge, and I crouched down and watched till he mounted her and rode off like a wild huntsman.

"I could not understand what he was after, though I knew it could be no good ; but before morning I saw it well enough."

"Then why did you did not make the charge sooner?" said the baronet, in low, hoarse tones. "It is false—'tis a base slander!" he exclaimed.

"Oh; that's soon explained," said Harper, coolly. "I wanted something more profitable than bringing him to the gallows, and I waited till that money came in. You see, Sir William, that he's slipped me after all, and so I'm forced to come to you ; and now you see, I expect you'll make it work my while to be silent."

Sir William made no reply, but he shuddered visibly, and passed his hand over his head, as if in hopeless confusion.

"I am ill, I think," he said feebly. "Speak quickly. What do you want? I can't argue. You must come again, when ——"

"Take another glass, Sir William," said the man, with a touch of feeling. "Come, I don't want to be too hard. Give me a cheque for one hundred pounds now, and I won't trouble you again for a while ; and when you're all right you'll give your son a hint that he'll have to settle up with me when he comes back. 'Tis not to be hushed up for nothing, that's certain."

Sir William drank the glass of wine, and then another.

The blood rushed back to his face in a crimson flash, and with the strength of the feverish reaction he drew a key from his pocket, opened his desk, took from it a cheque-book, and wrote a draft for one hundred pounds in shaking but still legible characters.

"There, there, begone!" he exclaimed, in loud angry tones, which startled the man from their contrast to their previous feebleness ; "begone! lest I have blood on my hands. My head seems burning."

Jonas Harper willingly obeyed the behest.

The wild look and clenched hands of the old man were painful confirmation of his words.

And though the weaver was little more than half the age and of double strength of his companion, yet there is a strange power in delirium which paralyses the courage of the boldest.

Harper hastily left the room and the house, without encountering any of the household.

But as he walked hurriedly along the path which led to the back entrance of the Grange, he heard the sound of wheels, and peering through the trees, he saw a pony chaise, with Lady Lloyd and her daughter seated in it.

Lucy was driving, and he caught a full view of her sweet, joyous face, as she talked eagerly, to her mother.

A pang of remorse seized the weaver at the thought of what awaited that lovely girl on her return to her home from her errand of kindness among his fellows.

But it was too late, and he crouched down behind the hedge, and then stole from the place like a felon.

That night there was hurry and agitation in the household at the Grange.

Servants hastening in different directions, doctors walking gravely down the stairs with ominous looks, and in a darkened room a wife and daughter silently crushing their grief while ministering to the unconscious sufferer.

Sir Willam lay for weeks between life and death, and when he once more came forth from the sick room he was an altered man.

Bowed, gloomy, reserved, fitfully varying between fits of excitement and extreme depression, few would have recognized in that broken, subdued, timorous man, the once hale, vigorous, calmly judging master of the Grange.

The loving, devoted wife knew more than any one besides of the inner causes of that melancholy change, but even she knew not all.

During that deep affliction Mr. Thornton had been son, brother, and ministering priest to the little family, but he too had his secret suspicions, which quickened his warm sympathies for the object of his deep though hidden attachment and her sorrowing parents.

But he was puzzled at times by the behavior of both Sir William and his wife, which was inconsistent with the theory of any knowledge of Evan's supposed crime.

They more than once alluded to the fact of young Allnutt's arrival in Cape Town and settlement in their friend's family, evidently unsuspicious that the highly lauded tutor was an imposter, a thief of another's name and credentials, who had crept under false colors into the bosom of an honorable household.

Still less could they suspect that Evan, whom they still so dearly loved, was the guilty cause of all this misery and crime.

And yet Sir William was evidently bowed by the weight of some dreadful secret, and his wife grew daily more subdued and careworn in look and manner, though sweet and cheerful as ever to outward seeming.

All this was a mystery Mr. Thornton could not solve, and with all his love for Lucy he hesitated to strive openly to win her as his wife till these strange and sad anomalies were removed.

And thus stood the affairs at the Grange and Llanover Farm at the period when our story opened, with the expected arrival of Evan Lloyd and his foreign friends and hosts, so eagerly anticipated by sweet Lucy so anxiously hoped for yet dreaded by Winifred, the deserted love of the returning wanderer.

Winifred had only heard once from Evan during the long months of his absence, and she had pined under and half resented his long silence.

But then came all the host of womanly excuses which a loving girl ever invents for the errors of him she loves.

It would be dangerous, impossible, for him to write to her.

He had sent many messages through Lucy, evidently meant to prove that he still remembered her, and that must suffice her.

The time would come when he could openly claim her as the first object of his love and attention, and she would fulfil his injunctions, and prove by her patience and courage that she was worthy to be his wife.

Poor Winifred! she little knew how infinitely above her absent lover in the scale of human perfection (such as it is) her beauty and innocence and unselfish love placed her, and how earthy the idol she had set up to bow down to and worship.

CHAPTER XV.

THE preparations at the Grange were complete.

Every room had been cleaned and decorated, and embellished by every feminine art for the reception of the travelers.

Lucy's taste had reigned over all; flowers knick-knacks of her own making, the rearrangement of old furniture, and in one or two cases the introduction of a few minor and inexpensive articles, had all been under her superintendence, and the result satisfied even her anxious eyes.

Her own room had been robbed of its little girlish decorations to make the apartment of the young daughter of the De St. Hilaires more refined and graceful-looking.

Her own little writing-table, her pet pictures, her small flower and ornament cases, had been removed to the guest's chamber, and well adorned its unpretending furniture by their simple elegance.

Then the sitting-rooms were scrupulously re-arranged and embellished with plants and flowers, and fresh-worked covers ; and the grounds swept, and mowed, and pruned, till the whole place was a picture of neatness and bright refined simplicity and good taste.

Only one room in the mansion was untouched, and that was the library.

Moody and silent, and strangely timorous and fitful, sat the father of the expected absentee, apparently little mindful of the bustle around him, or the joyful event in honor of which all these exertions were being made.

Sir William shrank strangely from any intercourse with any one but his own family and Mr. Thornton, and there were many dark hours when even Lucy and the clergyman were not admitted to his presence.

And it might be noted that those times the sweet countenance of the devoted wife wore a sad, anxious, humbled look, though she strove to hide from others, and even from her own daughter, that she was suffering from any hidden grief.

"Your father has one of his nervous headaches, love, and must be perfectly quiet," was her invariable reply to Lucy's entreaties to share her mother's cares for the invalid.

Whatever might be her secret thoughts, Lucy was too dutiful and loving to harass her mother by argument or questionings ; still, it was strange.

Charles Thornton, for one, knew that there must be some deeper cause for her exclusion from her father's apartment.

But, as we have said, the library was the only room in the Grange which had remained undisturbed, and it was probably the only one which the stranger guests would not enter during their stay.

All was complete.

The horses had been sent to Wrexham on the previous night, where, at the particular desire of Evan himself, the party were to sleep.

He wished his friends to have the best impression of the lovely country surrounding his home, and as Laura de St. Hilaire was passionately fond of riding, he had also consulted her tastes by an arrangement which enabled them to accomplish the last ten miles on horseback instead of a carriage.

For once in her life Lucy had spent both time and pains on her toilette.

She wished to gratify her brother by looking her best in the eyes of his friends.

It was not vanity, but the same simple loving nature which had prompted the care she had bestowed on the apartments of the house, that dictated that unusual anxiety as to her appearance.

Certainly she succeeded to the full.

Never had she looked more lovely than when she descended to the morning room in that simple white muslin dress, trimmed with narrow lace, and with a pale blue neck-ribbon and large sash, the very perfection of a morning toilette.

Her bright, fair hair was braided from her face, and only one long curl was allowed to fall on her graceful shoulders.

Her only ornament was a small chain and cross, a birthday gift from Evan himself.

Lady Lloyd was not in the room when Lucy entered, but in a few minutes the library door opened, and the mother joined her child, looking a little flushed and agitated, but still with the sweet, gentle smile that had ever been one of her greatest charms.

"Where is papa?" asked Lucy. "Won't he wait for them with us, mamma dear? Evan will think it unkind if he does not meet him and his friends directly, especially as they are perfect——"

She stopped as she saw her mother's pained look.

"Your father will come presently, love," said Lady Lloyd, quietly. He does not like the bustle of a first arrival, but he is watching from the window for the travelers. You know he could not be unkind to any one, Lucy ; certainly not to Evan."

"Forgive me, dearest mamma," said the girl, eagerly ; "I did not mean that—I only thought——"

"Never mind, darling ; come, let me look at you," said her mother. "Has Hannah helped you to dress?

"The good creature is dreadfully jealous for 'her child' before these 'furriners.' She says she does not like them at all."

"Oh, yes," said Lucy, laughingly ; "I had some trouble to please her. Am I all right, mamma? I wish I looked half as nice as you do."

"God bless you, my darling!" said the fond mother, regarding her child with an admiration she in vain tried to conceal. "You are my heart's pride and treasure. My Lucy is always charming in her mother's eyes."

Lucy had only spoken the truth when she half-envied her mother's appearance.

Few women at fifty ever looked so fresh, so youthful, and so thoroughly pleasing as Gwendoline, Lady Lloyd, in spite of the heavy trials she had undergone of late, in the absence of her son, and her husband's protracted illness.

And then her dress—so graceful and matronly in its simplicity.

That quiet gray silk, that delicate lace-cap and snow-white collar, suited well the still fair skin and white neck that almost rivaled Lucy's own in its snowy purity.

Yes, they were a mother and sister whom Evan Lloyd had no need to fear introducing to the fairest or noblest in his own or foreign lands.

While this little scene was enacting in the old-fashioned Grange, a little cavalcade, consisting of a lady, two gentlemen, and a servant were cantering merrily through the thick wood some seven or eight miles from Llanover.

They were a party to attract admiration and notice, had there been spectators to watch them, as they rode briskly along, and well suited, to casual observation, for the intimacy that appeared to exist between them.

The lady was in the first bloom of womanhood, a rich, dark brunette, with cheeks like the side of a September peach that has ripened next the sun, and eager changing eyes, that anticipated every smile upon her full lips, and gave to her face a piquante beauty quite irresistible.

She sat her horse admirably, and her slight form showed to advantage the close-fitting habit she wore.

Still there was something very un-English in her appearance, though she spoke the language with a very slight accent, that only gave sweetness to every word.

The gentleman at the lady's right hand bore sufficient resemblance to her to betray the relationship between them.

The brother's dark features had none of the brilliant color or expression that gave such life to her countenance.

Although he joined in the conversation and smiled at his sister's lively sallies with grave affection in his fraternal glance at the gay girl, he seemed naturally a reserved, silent man.

There was something in the stern black eyes, and about the firm mouth, which betokened an indomitable spirit when once aroused.

Their companion, Evan Lloyd, was little changed since we first introduced him to our reader, though his fine features had become somewhat more severe in their expression when in repose, and there were lines in his face that were certainly not consistent with his twenty-five summers.

He was conversing gaily with the young girl, and his eyes at times fastened themselves on her face with an expression that sent a riper color to her cheek, and a smile that would tremble over her lips in spite of every effort to prevent it.

"And you think I will like your sister?" she said, laughingly. "Really, if she is so sweet and charming as you say, I doubt if I am acting wisely in bringing my brother within her influence."

"My poor Lucy has no more idea of coquetry than a wood-pigeon," said. Evan, smilingly.

"Oh, don't be sure of that, sir," she replied; "woman's nature is the same the world over, and I would wager my pet curl that, if the truth were known, you would find that even the most innocent and retired little pigeon has her own ideas about subjugating every pert young mate within her reach."

"Is that the principal upon which Mademoiselle de St. Hilaire acts?" he asked, quickly.

"Oh, it is very unjust to turn my argument against myself," she replied bravely, though the tell-tale color dyed her cheeks again.

"It is only your quiet women that I distrust. I am never afraid of any other where Paul is concerned. Do you hear, brother?"

"Yes, yes," he replied, with a slight foreign accent. "Have you not learned, Mr. Lloyd, that it is useless to contend with Laura?

"When she finds herself worsted she leaps clean beyond the argument, and attacks from quite a different quarter."

"The clouds are gathering," observed Laura, only noticing her brother's remark by a graceful shrug of the shoulders, glad perhaps to change the subject.

"I think we shall have a storm. See, Mr. Lloyd, how fast the clouds are coming towards us!"

"We are nearly through the wood," he replied, "and there is a little village, or rather hamlet, not far from it, where we can stay if a storm should break."

"Better push on, sir," suggested the groom ; "there will be thunder before long or I am mistaken."

"David is no bad judge of the weather," remarked Evan ; "but I think he is mistaken for once. See, the sun is out again! Look, Mademoiselle de St. Hilaire, is not the view fine from here?"

Laura reined in her horse, and sat contemplating in silent admiration the novel, and certainly most beautiful prospect.

It was a panorama seldom seen out of the British Isles—a mingling of sea, and woodland, and cultivated fields, and distant hills, all embellished with the clothing of bright green turf, and rich masses of varied foliage of the trees which studded the hedges, or which were grouped together in woods.

Laura de St. Hilaire had a quick sense of the beautiful, and her speaking face expressed the delight and admiration she felt.

"Come, Laura, the clouds are gathering again ; we shall be drenched, thanks to your, romantic enthusiasm," said her brother, touching her horse with his long whip.

"For shame, Paul!" she exclaimed. "You have no taste, or you would not talk so barbarously."

"No taste for a wetting for myself, or you either, you silly girl," he replied. "There! the drops are falling now."

Paul was right.

The large thunder-drops began to come slowly and at intervals, which gradually became shorter and shorter, till it became evident that a regular storm had commenced.

Presently a vivid flash of lightning and a loud roar of thunder startled the horses even more than their riders, quickly followed by another and another tumult of the warring clouds.

Even in that moment of danger and discomfort, Laura was not insensible to the anxious care bestowed on her by Evan Lloyd.

He rode close to her rein, and, regardless of his own restless horse, kept a jealous watch on her steed at every new crush of the elements, and from time to time spoke words of encouragement to her.

But Laura was not naturally timid, and there were feelings nascent in her heart which give courage to the most cowardly when in the presence and supported by the anxious care of the being who inspires them.

Still, even to her high spirit there was a sweet enjoyment in being the object of so much solicitude, and she did not repel the half-needless assistance of her companion.

Paul de St. Hilaire's horse was more unmanageable than either Evan's or his sister's, and possibly he was not completely master of the animal.

The party galloped on till the hamlet was just in sight, and were actually within a few yards of one of its few cottages, when a flash more vivid than any which had yet lightened the gloom of the heavens, startled

Laura's horse so terribly, that it reared and plunged with such sudden violence that the young girl lost her balance, and in another moment would have been thrown.

Quick as thought, however, Evan had sprung from his horse, seized the reins with one hand, and lifted the girl to the ground ere Paul was fully aware of his sister's danger.

Laura was very pale when Evan replaced her on the now quiet and trembling animal, and prepared to lead her into the little village inn, about fifty yards distant.

Her eyes were bright, and more expressive than usual, as she said softly, "You have saved me Mr. Lloyed. I am not ungrateful."

Paul de St. Hilaire's thanks were brief, but deep, more like the acknowledgements of an Englishman than one of his demonstrative nation.

Evan's keen perception told him that he had won a lasting hold on the ardent feelings of the enthusiastic girl, and the permanent gratitude of her more reserved brother, that would serve him in good stead hereafte.:.

"We shall find shelter, if nothing else, here," said Evan, stopping at the door of the rustic hotel, and lifting Laura from the horse.

"You must have your clothes dried, Mademoiselle de St. Hilaire, and lie down after your exertions."

Laura smiled faintly, for in truth she was suffering far more than she would confess from the thorough drenching she had undergone, and a slight sprain of her ankle, which she had scarcely felt till she once more stood on the ground.

Always quiet and silent, but not the less observant, Paul saw the pale, wan look on his sister's bright face, and taking her in his arms, carried her into the house, and walking unceremoniously into the first room, laid her on a rude sofa, which luckily graced the scantily furnished apartment.

"Where's the landlady?" he asked of Evan, who quickly followed them.

"I have sent for her," was the brief reply; and a moment after a fresh-colored, motherly-looking woman appeared, to whose care Laura was committed, and the friends retired to an outer and more public sitting-room of the "Harp and Whistle."

For the next hour time passed on slowly enough for the young men.

The little inn furnished few materials either for refreshment, save a jug of capital ale and cakes for the former, and a really good-looking rifle in the corner of the room, placed against an old-fashioned screen, which seemed to afford an object of interest to Evan, by way of the latter.

He examined it on every side with even more than the usual interest of a sportsman, bestowing the most minute attention on every little peculiarity of the weapon, and gazing at it again and again, to the grave amusement of his companion.

"What, in the name of common sense, bewitches you with that gun, Mr. Lloyd?" he asked at last.

"One would think you were preparing for a murder or a duel."

Evan looked angrily at him for a moment and then recollecting himself, burst into a forced laugh.

"Not quite, St. Hilaire," said he; "though I don't say I would stick at the latter on an emergency.

"I was only struck with the novelty of finding so modern and expensive a weapon in this antediluvian place."

"You had better offer to purchase it," returned Paul. "I remember you said while you were with us that your own was damaged by water."

The landlord now entered with the refreshments (such as they were) ordered by his guests.

"I say, Jenkins, is that your rifle?" asked Evan, unheeding his friend's remark.

"Law bless you, no, Mr. Evan. I've no money for such a piece as that, and less time to use it," replied the landlord.

"It was left in my keeping months ago, and I only brought it down yesterday, to try a shot at the mark yonder. 'Tis the pigeon-shooting match to-morrow, you know, sir."

"Left with you some months since, Jenkins!" said Evan, his eyes still fixed on the piece.

"Why, who could be so foolish as to leave such a weapon as that so long? Was it any one you knew?"

"No, sir, a stranger to these parts, and a queer one too, to my thinking," was the reply.

"He came with a mere knapsack, with hardly a thing in it, and that gun, and stopped here about two days, and then he went out one day; I remember it well, more by token that it was the very day before your mill was burnt down, and he says, says he, 'Mr. Jenkins, take care of that rifle, and don't part with it to any one till I come again.

"I'll pay your bill now, says he, 'for I may not be back to-night; any way take care of that rifle, 'cause I am going to take it abroad.'

"In course I said I would, and Jacob Jenkins is never worse than his word."

"And did he never return?" asked Paul de St. Hilaire, as Evan did not immediately reply.

"No, sir, never," said the landlord: "but I took it in my head he might come again this autumn, and I cleaned up the piece right bright like, and tried it myself yesterday at the mark, to make sure it was all right."

Jenkins set down his burden and retired, and Paul turned to the window to observe the rapidly-clearing sky.

"'Tis almost fair now, Mr. Lloyd," he said.

But receiving no answer, he turned, and was struck by the pale, troubled look of his companion.

"Did you hurt yourself when you saved Laura so cleverly just now?"

"Pshaw! nonsense! I am all right," was the ungracious reply; and then, seeing Paul's surprised look, he added: "Excuse me, St. Hilaire, but that unlucky fire is no pleasant subject; and I suppose I am fool enough to be thin-skined whenever it is mentioned. Had you not better send to inquire after your sister? If she is well enough we might start from here in an hour; and she will be more comfortable at the Grange than here."

"There is no bell that I can see," said Paul; "but I will go myself and see about Laura."

When Paul had left the room, Evan once more snatched up the weapon, and touching a small spring in the stock, exposed to view a tiny brass band, on which a name was engaved.

He looked fixedly at it for a moment, then hastily shut it again, with a look of agony.

"If I could but shut it out like *that!*" he exclaimed, almost aloud; "but it will come back when I least expect it. Ah, if retribution should be at hand, when all seems fairest and safest! But I am a fool! Who can discover what is hidden for ever in this world?—and, after all, it was his fault more than mine."

The landlord now entered with a message from Paul, that Mademoiselle de St. Hillaire would be ready to proceed in half an hour.

"Shall I order the horses, Mr. Evan?" he asked.

"Yes; but stay, Jenkins," he said. "I suppose you don't mean to keep this rifle for ever?"

"Why, sir, for that matter," replied Jenkins, "I am not called on to part with it that I know of. I'm not pressed for money, thank God, and as the gentleman wished it, and paid his bill honorable, you see, I won't be worse than my word, and have to look foolish if he comes back and says, 'Mr. Jenkins, where's that there gun I left with you?' "

"But it is scarcely like," said Evan; "he must have forgotten it, or gone away altogether, or—"

"Departed this life, you would say," interrupted the landlord; "can't say certainly, sir, but somehow I fancy he had an idea he might come back, for he says, 'Don't answer any questions about me if any one inquires for me, Mr Jenkins;' and then I suppose I hesitated like, for says he, 'To speak the truth, I've got in a scrape, more from other folk's fault than my own, and so I don't want to show myself just at present, you see, and I'm sure I can trust you Mr. Jenkins: you're a man of honor and sense too,' says he. And so, sir, I promised I would not; and when Mr. Thornton came and asked a lot of questions I knew nothing, you see, and wouldn't know anything, do what he would; but 'tis different with you, sir, being my old master's son and a native-born gentleman, and one that would never get a poor fellow into trouble."

Evan had listened without interrupting this long-winded speech, but his face was very pale, and a shrewder person than Jacob Jenkins would have suspected some hidden motive for the interest the young man displayed in the tedious story.

"Well," said Evan, 'if you take my advice Jenkins, you won't exhibit this gun if you do not intend to part with it. 'Tis a first-rate one."

"If you'd like to take a shot at that there pigeon with it Mr. Evan, you can and welcome," said Jenkins. "You used to be a crack shot when you was a boy."

At that moment Paul entered, supporting his sister who walked with a slight lameness, though her bright face was animated and blooming as ever.

In reply to Evan's inquiry, she said, "I am quite better thank you, only a slight stiffness in the ankle, which my ride will take off."

"One would think water and fire were your natural elements, Mademoiselle de St. Hilaire," said Evan, "you look so little the worse for your adventure.

"Thank you," she said; "I am not quite such a mermaid or witch as you would make out; but, Mr. Lloyd, what is that extraordinary object hanging there?"

"That is supposed to be a pigeon," he replied. "There will be a match to-morrow for shooting the head from the body of a real live mark. Would you like to see it?"

"It seems a cruel sport,' said Laura with a shudder.

"It may be," said Evan, laughing; "but English country-bred youths are not trained to think so. It is all the fault of your Paris education that you are not inured to such sports."

"Oh, I lived enough in the country to cure any town prejudices," replied Laura, "and I confess the trial of skill must be interesting; only it would be just as clever on that inanimate image as the poor living bird."

"Then you shall have the interest without the pain to your tender woman's heart," said Evan. "Jenkins, get me a charge for that rifle."

In a few minutes Jenkins, returned.

Evan loaded the rifle—opened the window—and took an apparently careless aim at the waving image of the pigeon, the difficulty of which was increased by a strong breeze having sprung up since the storm. The image shook, and then the body dropped leaving the head still attached to the beam, and Laura rewarded the success by a smile.

"You would be an awkward antagonist in a duel, Lloyd," said Paul. It was the second time he had mentioned that word. Was it ominous?

"I am a fair shot, sir, I believe," replied Evan, carelessly. "But as to dueling, we are not quite so fond of that as your countrymen; though I for one would never hesitate to demand or give satisfaction for an injury. But it is a harsh subject for a lady's ears, and I see the horses are ready. Mademoiselle de St. Hilaire, are you really able to resume your journey?"

Laura answered in the affirmative, and in a few minutes they were again on their way.

In a quarter of an hour after their departure, a grim face peeped from behind a large wood screen against which Evan had been leaning, and looked cautiously around before the rest of the figure emerged from its concealment.

When he was fully satisfied that no one was near, he stole quietly and noiselessly to the door, and watched for a few moments, but all was still, and reclosing the door, he went quickly to the corner where the rifle had been placed by Evan, and carefully felt over the part where the spring, touched by the young man was situated.

But it was so carefully managed that he could not discover it for a few moments, and at last it was by a mere accident that his coarse fingers pressed the delicate machinery which opened the little aperture.

The small band flew up, and the engraved characters were at once plainly visible. It was a name and inscription:

"Henry Allnut, from his friend E. L."

Jonas Harper, for he it was, smiled grimly as he read this inscription.

"Ah, ah, my young master," said he, "is this another of your pretty little tricks? There's something in this rifle that flusters you, that's certain; and E. L. stands for Evan Lloyd; and old Jenkins says the man never came back. 'Tis a queer business, and may serve my turn as well as the other, which after all wasn't quite as certain as I made out the poor old man, though it looked ugly enough. But this is another guess sort of thing, and if I can follow it out it may do me good service, a vast deal better than going back to Manchester, which might not be quite convenient."

He replaced the piece, walked quickly from the room, and a few momets after left the house,

But as soon as he was fairly out of sight and had satisfied himself that no one was near, he took out a dirty pocket-book, and wrote for some moments on one of the leaves with a pencil, and then returned it to his pocket.

Like many of his class, Jonas Harper had been decently educated, and he could write a rapid and good hand.

The page, now quickly covered, contained a description of the rifle he had just examined, the day of the month, and the heads of the story he had overheard from Jacob Jenkins.

It was a strange methodical foresight far beyond Harper's station in life, and apparently inconsistent with his rough manners and coarse mind; but those who are acquainted with the Lancashire weavers will comprehend the mixture of shrewdness and coarseness, poverty and education, which was to be found in Jonas Harper.

They are a race all distant from their Southern brethren of the same class, and their ideas and ways of thinking and acting are completely dissimilar,

The task complete he trudged briskly on in an opposite direction to Llanover, and was soon lost to sight in the thick wood through which our equestrians had lately passed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE hour of expectation before an arrival is always a tedious and agitating one.

Until that hour came, Lady Lloyd and Lucy had scarcely had leisure to realize the fact of Evan's return, and while there was anything to embellish or arrange they could ward off all impatience.

But now everything was ready, and they could only feel that the absentee was on his way to them, and that any moment might restore the beloved one to their longing eyes.

None but the mother and sister of an only son and brother as fondly loved and as little absent as Evan Lloyd, can, perhaps, comprehend the yearning, the fluttering of the heart, the half-pained anxiety for the sound of the approach of the expected son and brother.

Lucy's affectionate desire for her brother's return was somewhat mingled with anxiety as to his verdict on herself, and his satisfaction in presenting her to his new friends.

"He used to complain of my getting sunburnt in summer," she thought; "but he won't find fault with that now. I have so completely covered up my skin with that immense hat, that Hannah says I am as fair as Christmas time; and I've arranged my hair as he bade me, instead of letting it fall in curls as it used to do. Yes, I think he'll see I've tried to please him."

"Lucy," said her mother, in a low, trembling voice, "he is coming; I hear the sound of the horses' feet."

"No; dear mamma, it is only old Watkins in his heavy boots."

"Yes, it is he, Lucy. Listen," continued Lady Lloyd.

Just then the door opened, and Sir William appeared, looking painfully nervous and shaken.

Lady Lloyd looked anxiously at the fine face,—so painful a ruin of manly beauty and strength; while Lucy flew to the door, and then drew back, remembering that her brother was not alone, and that he might not like any great demonstration of affection.

"You will come with me, Sir William," said his wife. "Try and exert yourself, for your son's sake."

The old man—for he was old now, though not in years—shuddered, but obeyed his wife's gentle impulse, and slowly followed her to the door.

The little group were just entering the carriage-drive.

Evan rode forward a little in advance, and in another moment he had dismounted and was in his mother's arms.

It was not in human nature to have resisted that sweet motherly look of affection, nor be insensible to the soft shower of mingled tears and kisses that fell on his face, as she murmured: "Oh, Evan, my dear, dear son!"

Then the mother remembered that there were others to welcome, and, raising herself from his neck, turned to the strangers with an unneeded apology for her engrossing love for her son, and gave a cordial welcome to the guests.

Evan had cast a keen glance at his friends to see the effect his mother's impulsiveness had made on them.

But Laura was smiling through tears, and her brother's handsome face was bright with gratified feeling.

Lucy had held back, waiting respectfully for her father to advance, but, seeing that he hesitated, came forward, so lovely and bright, that any brother might have been proud of her.

Then the mist which had gathered over Paul's eyes cleared away, a look of admiration beamed from his expressive face, and when he saw the girl's red lips upturned to her brother's kiss, it seemed to him that the careless fellow was gathering ripe fruit, leaving him parched and longing.

"Papa," pleaded Lucy, casting an anxious look on her father, who still remained in the background.

Sir William came forward slowly, and took his son's offered hand with a hurried, nervous grasp.

"You do not seem well, Sir," said Evan. "I am afraid that you have not recovered from your illness. You did not tell me this, mother mine."

"Your father is better, but not strong, and your coming has been too much for him," she said; hurriedly. "William, dear, you welcome your old friend's children to your house, I am sure."

"Yes, I give them a hearty welcome for their father's sake, and shall, no doubt, soon do so for their own," said Sir William, who seemed to rouse up at his wife's words, and taking a hand of each, he looked for a moment like his old self.

Then his eyes turned again on Evan, and the nervous tremor returned.

He retired once more to his usual place of refuge, with a muttered apology for sudden indisposition.

"You will excuse him, I know," said Lady Lloyd, with her sweet smile. "Sir William has been so nervous and uncertain since his severe illness; but he will be better now Evan has come."

Paul de St. Hilaire offered his arm to conduct his hostess to the apartment she had just left, and Evan gave his to Laura; but her ankle was stiff and painful, now that she stood on it once more, and without ceremony he lifted her in his arms and carried her to the sofa.

When he placed her on its cushions her face was certainly more blooming, and her eyes brighter than usual.

Perhaps it might be from pain, or a whispered word from the young man's lips during that short embrace.

They observed early country hours at the Grange.

Supper was over, and the little party were gathered round the still open bay-window in the pretty drawing-room, listening to the animated and sparkling conversation of Evan with Laura de St. Hilaire, who insisted that her ankle was cured by an application of some lotion of old Hannah's, and who, therefore, made one of the circle, her foot supported by a large ottoman.

Paul devoted himself chiefly to his host, whom he looked upon with reverence as his late father's honored friend; and Sir William pleased and interested with his grave but intelligent remarks, seemed for the time to regain his former cheerful manner.

But from time to time he would relapse into abstraction and gloom, and, as Paul's keen observation remarked, these fits generally came over him after a glance at the corner where sat his son and the fair young Frenchwoman.

"Could it possibly be that he disapproved the evident admiration of Evan for his sister?"

The blood of the St. Hilaires fired at the thought; and then Paul's better judgment cooled the impetuous impulse by remembering how inconsistent such an idea must be with the long visit of Evan to their home, and the cordial invitation sent to themselves.

"No; some other cause must exist for that strange, troubled look, and he had no right to attempt to dive into the family secrets of the Grange."

With these slight exceptions, it was a pleasant evening.

Sir William and Lady Lloyd were persons of no ordinary talent, and, in spite of the secluded life they had led for so many years, their ideas and remarks were characterized with a simple dignity and intelligence which delighted both Paul and his sister.

Lucy sat timid and quiet by her father, listening to his conversation with the stranger, whose foreign courtesy and deference of manner half awed her inexperienced mind,—so totally different were they from that of any of the unpolished natives, or even from the simple, good breeding of Charles Thornton.

But she became gradually more at ease, and her loveliness and speaking eyes more than atoned for her shy silence and reserve in Paul's estimation.

Before the party separated he had even succeeded more than once in getting her to volunteer a remark, and there was a delicious freshness in the very difficulty that gave her a new and irresistible charm in the young count's eyes.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

LOVER AND LORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AN ANGEL UNAWARES"
"A SHOCKING SCANDAL," "SOWING
AND REAPING," "PEGGY,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER X.—[CONTINUED.]

ARTHUR'S pale face flushed; his blue eyes kindled with sudden grateful fire.

"You mother! Heaven bless you for the charitable thought! You did not even know her."

"My dear, I knew how well you loved her, and poor unhappy girl, how she had loved you only too well. It was only right that your mother should stand beside the grave—your mother, who should one day have welcomed her home."

"Thank you!" Arthur said simply, but there was a world of unuttered eloquence in the look that accompanied the brief phrase. He did not speak again for a few minutes, but sat dreamingly staring with dim unseeing eyes into the fire.

Mrs. Beaupre waited a second or so for the questions that did not come; then thinking it best to conclude the subject that bristled with painful complications, and would act as a perpetual irritant to her son's mind, she went on to volunteer information.

"You know that Captain Bruce is dead?"

Arthur turned his face round from the fire.

"I did not know that, though Cristine told me——" He paused; the mention of Cristine's name touched too sore a spot in his remembrance.

"Poor old man! I hope he died before——"

"Yes, yes," Mrs. Beaupre interposed quickly; "he never recovered consciousness, and died the third day after the stroke.'

"And Mrs. Bruce—and her daughter?"

Mrs. Beaupre's face flushed now, and the clear blue eyes that her son had inherited flashed with indignation.

"Where they are now I do not know or care to know, Arthur. The woman seems to be a weak and selfish creature; and the girl—— My dear, when I came here I found Cristine Singleton established as your nurse!"

Arthur turned around quickly, and there was no misreading the disgust and annoyance of his look.

"She was indeed," Mrs. Beaupre went on, with an emphatic little nod, well pleased that she had at last stirred Arthur from his lethargy—to change morbid grief to honest indignation was nothing less than a triumph in the mother's eyes. "I took an intense dislike to the girl in the first moment of our meeting, though she had played the part of Good Samaritan to you."

"Good Samaritan!" the young man echoed bitterly. "I wonder that I did not die under her hands! Mother, do you know that Nora's step-sister did her best to swear Nora's life away?"

"I know; and, in spite of all her protestations of devotion and unselfishness, I let Miss Singleton see that I rated her at her true value. When she proposed to share my watch and help to nurse you, I reminded her that her first duty was to her widowed mother; when she spoke, with tears in her eyes, of the close friendship existing betwen you, I answered that that friendship must be a thing of the past now, as you had loved Nora Bruce too well and loyalty to endure the presence of the girl who had volunteered the evidence that must have convicted her."

At any other time Arthur Beaupre must needs have laughed at the picture of Cristine Singleton wasting her wiles and fascinations on the shrewd old Scotchwoman whose perceptions were as keen as her heart was warm and tender.

But the mere mention of Cristine' name filled him with horror and disgust.

"Do not talk of her mother; we have done with her now."

"I think so," Mrs. Beaupre agreed, with perfect placidity. "She went at last, looking very pallid and uncomfortable, and doing her best to leave a sting behind her."

"In what way?"

"Well, my dear, she said that, as a Cristian I ought to appreciate the forgiving spirit which brought her to your side, for, though at heart you really loved her best, you had jilted her for her step-sister's sake."

Arthur stared blankly, appalled by the monstrous fiction.

"I love or jilt her!" he cried savagely, "Mother, it is most wickedly untrue!"

"So I told her; and I do not think she liked the information. I said that you had frequently mentioned her in your letters to me as an agreeable partner of the Nettleton balls, and a well-looking much-admired young lady, but that, from the moment you saw her, Nora Bruce had stolen into your heart; and then——"

"And then?" Arthur echoed eagerly.

"And then she went," Mrs. Beaupre finished, with a little fitting smile. "And as you say, Arthur, I think we have done with Miss Singleton now."

Arthur answered only by a slight motion of the head and silence again fell on the pair.

But watching the sharpened outline of the face so dear to her, Mrs. Beaupre felt, on the whole, well content with her work.

The eyes were stern and sad; but the look of dreary apathy had passed away, never she hoped to return.

Sorrow would still reign supreme in the strong and loving heart, but other feelings were waking into life, and it would rule with undivided sway no more.

The blow that had not killed him outright would not crush all energy and manhood out of the strong energetic nature. Her son was given back to her indeed, and for her the darkest hour of life was passed.

So the sunlight pierced the clouds to the mother's hopeful gaze, and, for her sake, her son strove to forget that his life-path lay through that Valley of the Shadow of Death which his lost but unforgotten love had trodden before him.

CHAPTER XI.

AND all this time no one had asked what had become of Vance Singleton.

Forgotten and overlooked in the preparations for the grand wedding, against which he made, from first to last, a more or less sarcastic protest, Captain Bruce's stepson had not come forward to take part in the terrible scenes that followed, and to no one but his mother did this seem strange.

"If Vance were only here," poor Mrs. Bruce had murmured, in the first bitterness of her widowed grief, "He would help us—he would tell us what we had better do."

"He would share the little that we have, and add his helplessness to ours," Cristine answered coldly. "When did Vance ever help any one, mother, or think of any one but himself?"

The mother answered only by a fresh burst of tears and a murmured reproach to Cristine for her cruelty. The haughty arrogant woman was completely crushed and utterly submissive to her imperious daughter's will.

"There is little enough for us two," the girl added, with a sickly smile. "Let Vance support himself for a while at least; he has left us to bear this shame and agony alone."

"He is not in England, Cristine. You know he told——"

She paused abruptly, choking over the once familiar word. But Cristine calmly finished the sentence.

"Told Nora he should be away, I know. Well, it is only fair that, when he comes, he should find us gone. England is unendurable for us at present. Let us try France and Germany, mother for a time."

Mrs Bruce assented as meekly as a child; she had made such disastrous work of her management for others that she was quite content to be managed for the rest of her life.

If she rebelled at any arrangement of Cristine's, she rebelled in secret, as she learned at last even to weep for Vance.

And, meantime, where was Vance?

Had he deserted his mother and sister in the moment of their bitter need, with a supreme selfishness of which few men would have been capable, or was he in some remote corner of the earth still happily ignorant of the tragedy in which Nora's young life had closed.

Mrs. Bruce clung desperately to the latter belief; Cristine held 'to the former with a firm undoubting faith.

Between the brother and sister there had always been the strangest tacit enmity; they were as unlike, physically, morally, and mentally as two children of one mother well could be, Cristine, with her chilly temperament and frostily perfect face, being the very opposite of the dark-eyed, dark-haired, recklessly impetuous Vance, who openly avowed, from the hour of his mother's second marriage, that he greatly preferred Nora to his own sister, even adding with boyish insolence that he thought her an infinitely prettier girl, which latter declaration Cristine neither forgave nor forgot.

And indeed, up to the time of Arthur Beaupre's reported death, Nora had been the one saving influence of the young scapegrace's life.

His step-father's severity, his mother's foolish fondness, Cristine's cold sneers—these were so many incentives to ill; but Nora was always his gentle counsellor and friend, patient with his many failures, tolerant with his many backslidings, hopeful always of better things.

"You shall not give yourself up, Vance," she would cry hopefully from time to time—"you have brains and youth and strength; but you must work, dear."

And from time to time Vance promised that he would; but his was a light careless nature, occupied always with the pleasure of the moment, and he never really took that lesson to heart until the coming of those darkly-shadowed days in which Nora lay longing for the death that would not come, and he found himself adrift, as it were, on an unfriendly sea.

Life at Nettleton had never been very congenial; it grew unbearable when Captain Bruce was more than usual gloomy and abstracted; Mrs. Bruce, oppressed with a conviction that, when wrong so generally, some one must be to blame, was fretful even to her darling son; while Cristine's never amiable temper grew so absolutely fiendlike that at times he fancied she was going mad.

Oppressed by his home surroundings, the young man absolutely began to think, and, strangely enough, he did not find the novel occupation a pleasant one.

"You are six-and-twenty," suggested the inward monitor, who, having once been stirred from his long repose, was disagreeably persistent in making himself heard. "You have no profession, because you were too idle to adopt one when your step-father offered you the means.

"You have squandered so large a portion of his modest savings that he has in all probability neither the means nor the inclination to renew the offer now.

"Vance Singleton, you cannot blink the fact—you are an ignominious social failure.

"It is high time you were up and doing, if you can do no more than take the Queen's shilling, and follow the colors round the world, as many a better man has done before you."

It was a fine treumpet-call to duty; but he answered it in rather a lagging fashion.

All his senses were confused, and his eyes were somehow dazzled, as though he had passed suddenly into a new and trying light.

He wanted to strike out a new track, but as yet could not see his way clearly.

Never, he thought, did man set forth more lightly armed for the great battle of life—never did man enter the great market-place with goods less suited for barter—two helpless hands, a not too brilliant brain, and a sufficiently costly, but exceedingly useless education.

He could not write, he could not paint—it was too late to turn lawyer, parson, or doctor.

Decidedly his was not a bright or promising look-out.

If Nora had been out and about, as usual, ready to administer one of her friendly little lectures, and contradict her scolding words with the overflowing sympathy of her pretty changeful eyes, he would have carried his new weight of cares to her.

The two young creatures would have put their heads together, and, ten chances to one, her quick wits would have seen some other way out of the maze.

But Nora lay between life and death, absorbed in a sad dream-world of her own, far away from him and his smaller troubles.

And so it chanced that, in the utter lack of all home counsel, he carried all his woes to—Nettie Clare.

He never knew how he came to think of telling his woes to the young actress—indeed he did not "think of it" at all.

Somehow the dismal tale popped out unawares, and he hardly knew he had spoken on the subject when he found himself listening to Nettie's sagely-given advice.

"So you are not rich, and you have no profession, and you are six-and-twenty years of age," she said slowly. "Dear me, Mr. Singleton, that is rather a desperate state of affairs!"

The words ought to have irritated him; but they did not, falling gently from Nettie's pretty red lips.

She looked musingly into his face as she spoke, with frank brown eyes that were a shade graver and less saucy than usual; but he thought them all the prettier for that.

"It is indeed, Miss Clare," he said gloomily.

He was in a specially gloomy frame of mind on that day, for Captain Bruce had discovered outstanding debts, and Vance's conscience had echoed every word he spoke.

He had wasted all his opportunities, he was a burden upon his step-father.

It was high time that he did something for himself.

But what—oh, what was that something to be?

"Desperate diseases require desperate remedies," Miss Clare said quietly. "What do you propose doing now?

"For of course Captain Bruce is right; you must be a drone in the hive no more."

There was a pretty decision in her tone which at once shamed and comforted him.

She did not think much of what he had hitherto done, evidently she thought there was no hope of his doing something still.

"Enlist perhaps—or perhaps try the Colonies, that modern Tom Tiddler's Ground of the impecunious," Vance answered, with rather a forced laugh—for he felt that he was poor indeed when he could not pretend to be even the owner of a plan.

But Nettie waved both sketchy suggestions away with a peremptory movement of her little hand.

"Enlist? Nonsense! You cann't seek the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth, because I do not think we are at war with more than half a dozen black chiefs.

"You would hardly care to lounge away your life in country quarters, flirting with all the nursemaids in town—now would you, Mr. Singleton?"

"Emphatically no!" the young man said, with a smile at the little creature's ready energy and desperate earnestness.

Which of Nettie Clare's numerous admirers would have suspected her of talking so long without one jesting word or laughing look?

"But you forget the other alternative, Miss Clare."

"The Colonies!" She laughed at last, but it was in very genuine scorn of her companion's simplicity.

"You foolish boy, do not you know that emigration means only another and heavier drain upon the paternal purse? No, no! If you want really practical advice, I could give you some; but"—with a shake of her little close-curled head—"perhaps I had better not."

"Do!" he cried eagerly, for there was something so business-like in the little creature's look that he felt certain she had pondered some real project.

She was certainly some five or six years Vance's junior, but so much wiser and more practical that there seemed nothing incongruous or absurd in the patronising "You foolish boy!" or the semi-maternal tone into which she had unconsciously slipped.

"Give me your advice, Miss Clare; I promise to prize and take it!"

"Not quite so fast!" she interrupted brightly. "Now prepare for an electric shock, Mr. Singleton! Why do you not join us?"

He stared at her in blank amazement. This was an electric shock indeed!

"Join you!" he faltered feebly. "Go on the stage! Act! Oh, Miss Clare, I am quite sure I could not do it!"

"Without a great deal of coaching you certainly could not," she answered calmly.

"It is only in novels that Juliets and Romeos appear on the inspiration of the moment and take the town by storm. I do not propose any such dazzling feats to you.

"But I am certain that, with ordinary diligence and attention, the stage would be a more than decently lucrative career to you; and I am not alone in my opinion that your natural qualifications are first-rate.

"I do not know a better judge than mother, and she was saying only yesterday what an ideal lover you would make!"

Vance felt himself blush, forgetting the purely business point of view from which she and her mother appraised him.

"Mrs. Clare is very kind," he murmured rather foolishly, at which Nettie shrugged her shoulders with a droll little laugh.

"Kind! You do not suppose she meant to flatter you?" she asked, so evidently amused by the idea that he colored again, this time with vexation and disgust. "No; she meant simply this, that you are tall and good-looking, have a handsome face and a soft sentimental look, that you speak well and clearly and carry yourself like a gentleman, and that the demand for such qualities as these is at present much greater than the supply.

"Now do you understand my suggestion, Mr. Singleton, and will you consider it?"

She spoke with absolute simplicity, without the faintest change of color or tinge of embarrassment in her bright frank manner.

The vainest man alive could not have fancied her personally interested in the subject.

The conviction that this was so piqued and wounded Vance, though he did his best to hide what he knew to be a stupid and ungrateful feeling.

"You are more than kind to think of me at all," he began stiffly. "I am most grateful; but——"

"But you are offended all the same," Nettie interrupted quickly; and for the first time there came a little flush of color to the creamy-tinted skin, a slight ring of mortified feeling to the clear pretty voice.

"Forget that I was so foolish as to take you seriously, Mr. Singleton. Look on my advice as an excellent joke, and seek a more dignified adviser next time."

"Never!" Vance cried hotly, feeling sure that the extra sparkle of the bright brown eyes was a lustre born of tears, and hating to think that any foolish words of his had pained this generous and warm-hearted little friend.

"Nettie—Miss Clare, you do not think me such an ungrateful fool! You are joking now!"

He caught her hand and held it very closely.

Such a pretty soft little hand it was, as soft and white as Nora's or Cristine's, and yet kept that modest household together.

This slim slight creature was the bread-winner of a family—while he——

With quite a new sort of disgust Vance hated himself sincerely at that moment, and began to see Nettie's suggestion in quite a different light.

"Joking! Indeed I am not," she said, turning round an April face and quietly releasing herself.

"I was very foolish to make such a suggestion; please forget it."

"I will do nothing of the kind," he said decisively. "If you really think that I can make an honest living on the stage, I will take to it to-morrow."

"Really?" she asked, with sparkling eyes. "You mean what you say? You have no prejudice against the profession?

"You do not fear the loss of caste, or dignity, or——"

He could not help it—Vance laughed aloud, cutting the thread of her speech in twain a little rudely; but she did not mind that.

"My dear Miss Clare, what dignity have I to lose?" he asked sincerely. "The dignity of loafing about in a house that does not belong to me, and sponging on a step-father who has already wasted on me more than he can afford?

"No, caste and dignity may go overboard at once—besides, it seems to me that actors are rather swells nowadays."

"Oh, yes," Nettie agreed readily, drawing up her small person with a quaint little air of pride, "the old vulgar prejudices are fast disappearing! Actors go everywhere now."

"But they must learn to act," he said, with a smile at his pretty monitress; "and I have not a rudimentary notion of the art."

"Oh, as for that, people must walk before they can run!" Miss Clare said sagely. "You do not want to become a 'star' all at once, I hope?"

Having but the vaguest idea of what a "star" might be, but guessing from the severity of the tone that the aspiration was an improper one, Vance answered humbly that he had never entertained it.

"Then all the rest will be easy enough. Mother and I will 'coach' 'you; you can get a small engagement with us perhaps, and then——"

"We must trust the rest to fate," the young man answered gravely; "and, whether it gives me failure or success, Miss I shall never forget my debt of gratitude to you."

"Oh, hush!" she cried, with a look of genuine distress.

"We do not say much about it, Mr. Singleton; but do you think we can ever forget—mother and I—that we owe you Jenny's life?

"We could not pay that, though we ensured you the fame of an Irving to-morrow."

CHAPTER XII.

FROM that day Nettie Clare's suggestion and Nettie herself occupied a prominent place in Vance Singleton's thoughts.

She had at least offered him one way of escape out of his difficulties, and, though he did not much relish the thought of an actor's life, anything was better than that he was at present leading.

Little by little, he began to see that any occupation which brought him and Nettie together would sooner or later grow easy and congenial to his taste.

They were not old friends.

Six months back he hardly knew Miss Clare by name, and it was the purest accident that brought these two together—the accident, first, that made him useful to the little lame sister in whom the girl's heart was wrapped up, and afterwards the idleness that allowed him to drift into any intimacy that led him away from his dismal house.

The rescue to which Mrs. Clare and her daughter attached an heroic importance, and of which Nettie spoke with such exaggerated gratitude still, seemed to the young man but a simple affair, costing him only one jerk of the muscles and a muddy coat-sleeve—neither more nor less than that.

He happened to be standing outside Victoria Station one very wet and windy night, waiting for a man who had promised to meet him there, and idly watching the proceedings of the people who were fighting over their luggage and for the cabs around.

A train from the country was just in, and the usual scene of bustle and confusion was proceeding.

A little to his left, upon the crowded platform, stood a small slight girl whose movements he found himself following with amused attention.

She was quite young, and looked half boyish in her close-fitting ulster and round felt hat, with her close-cropped curly hair.

She was a thorough little woman of business, and superintended the moving of her numerous boxes and basket-trunks with cool, clear-headed promptitude and decision.

Beside her, clinging closely to her arm, and looking nervously around, stood a pale large-eyed child, warmly dressed in black velvet and fur, with pale yellow hair falling loosely over her shoulders, perhaps to conceal the slight outward curve of the spine.

Her face had the wistful peevish look born of incessant pain, and her voice, which was very clear and sharp, had a certain fretful ring.

"Where is mother, Nettie?" she said, as the two followed the now completely laden truck to the station door; and, watching them, Vance saw that one small foot dragged in a pitifully helpless fashion. "Mother said she would come."

"But it is such a wet night, dear, mother is much better at home getting some nice tea ready for us," the elder sister answered cheerfully.

"Come, Jenny, get in; you need not wait for the boxes."

She held the cab door open.

The child drew away her hand pettishly, and, screwing up the pale peakish face as though she were about to cry, said, in a sharp accusing tone—

"Mother said she would come; we must wait for her, Nettie. Ah, there she is!"

Forgetting her lameness, she sprang out into the muddy roadway, only to reel and fall right in the track of a heavily laden omnibus, at that moment starting from the station door.

The driver, high perched, and blinded by the thick steaming mist that lay like a veil over all things, saw nothing of what had happened, and really thought the young man drunk or mad when he stopped his plunging horses with a jerk that nearly flung him from his seat.

He swore savagely at first.

When he saw Vance pick up the unconscious child, his ruddy face grew almost pale.

"Lor' save us! I have not killed her!" he asked, in a husky whisper; and, though Mr. Singleton knew that the horses' hoofs had not even touched the yellow tresses, he could not with any degree of certainty say that the child still lived.

She lay like a dead thing in his strong arms, so white and cold and still.

However, she did not die.

In two or three days' time was she any the worse for the accident, though it was and will always remain a marvel to Vance that the mother and sister did not expire of sheer fright.

Jenny Clare was not an attractive child from an outsider's point of view, being peevish and exacting even beyond the privilege of a confirmed invalid.

She was just the light of life to those two lonely women.

Their gratitude for the service rendered them was painfully earnest and sincere, and Vance grew to hate the subject of Jenny's rescue, and half made up his mind to see no more of the people who made so much of a bit of cheap heroism.

It was easier to form the resolution than to keep it, as he soon found out, and most afternoons found him listening to Mrs. Clare's gentle chatter, Jenny's querulous complaints, or the shrewd laughing philosophy of Nettie herself.

He did not understand the fascination that shabby London lodging had for him, nor how he came to listen with such exhaustless interest to Mrs. Clare's oftentimes long and rambling anecdotes of their strange and chequered existence, to bear so patiently with Jenny's whims, to feel that all his troubles and vexations became lighter when he poured them into Nettie's sympathising ear.

The simple family history was soon told.

Mrs. Clare, a faded pretty woman, with a clear soft voice, and the bright brown eyes that Nettie had inherited, had been an actress before her marriage with the young surgeon Robert Clare; but she had abandoned the stage, and settled down to her wifely and motherly duties without regret, though she had never severed her connection with her old friends—a fact that stood her in good stead in the time of her trouble; for, when, after sixteen years of quiet struggling happiness, poor Robert Clare died quite suddenly in the prime of his manhood, leaving his widow and her two young children totally unprovided for, those warm-hearted unconventional friends rallied unanimously around them and did them yeoman's service.

Jenny was, and always would be, a helpless cripple.

Mrs. Clare, though still comparatively young, was too broken in health and spirits to return to the scene of her modest triumphs.

But Nettie, with her pretty graceful little figure—everything might be hoped for Nettie in her mother's old profession.

So, being carefully drilled, taught, and brought out under most favorable auspices, Nettie in due time made her appearance, took the public fancy in a small way, and became, after a brief apprenticeship, the bread-winner of the small family.

Not a little proud was Miss Nettie of her important position.

Though Mrs. Clare often wondered and doubted whether Robert would sleep quietly in his green grave out on the northern hill if he knew the burden that had been lain on his little girl's slender shoulders, and the fashion in which she bore it, she could not but share the girl's unselfish exultation in her own success.

"You shall be so comfortable, mother, you and Jenny, by-and-by!" the clear young voice would cry, with a little thrill of triumph.

"I am quite a 'star' in the provinces already—and presently I mean to be one here."

Perhaps this utter and unselfish absorption in the family interests kept Nettie safely shielded from the baser influences of her strange new life.

Certain it is that in an atmosphere in which nine out of ten girls would have deteriorated she kept her brave, frank simplicity of manner, her perfect honesty of speech and thought, absolutely intact.

A little harder and shrewder in driving a bargain, a little more independent in action than if she had grown up a little home-keeping maiden in her father's care, the family bread-winner perforce became, but in no other way did she suffer from contact with the rough outer world.

The little actress dropped her tinsel robes to play at home with heart-whole energy the part of loving daughter and devoted sister-nurse.

She was returning from a brief seaside engagement on the momentous evening of her first meeting with Vance, having taken Jenny with her, thinking that the fresh salt breezes might benefit the delicate town-bred child.

"But for you, Mr. Singleton, that journey would have had a terrible ending," Mrs. Clare declared one day for the twentieth time, pressing her handkerchief to her eyes; "but for you we should have lost the very light of our existence."

Vance felt as stupid as a man always does feel when he is desperately over-praised for a thing that cost him little or no exertion, and wished he could think of some civil way of "cutting her short."

The rather gloomy-looking "light of her existence" came to his assistance by announcing that Nettie had just turned into the street.

It was pretty to see how the worn unchildlike face brightened, and how furiously the fair head nodded its greeting.

Every incident of that by-gone time, of their first meeting, and the quiet fashion in which his chance acquaintance with the Clares had cemented itself into a steady friendship, passed before Vance Singleton as he meditated over Nettie's strange proposition.

After all, why should he not try the life she led—at least for a while?

He was not troubled with shyness.

He had a good memory and a strong voice.

His young Mentor assured him that these were the only absolutely necessary qualifications for a stage career.

There were prizes, she assured him, in this queer profession, and in every other he seemed to draw a hopeless blank.

Well—he drew himself together with sudden resolution—coute que coute, he would try this.

Nettie was delighted when he told her his determination, and Mrs. Clare admitted, after some slight demur, that she thought the choice a wise one.

They both agreed that, until he had achieved at least some measure of success, it would be well to say nothing at home of the bold step he had taken.

"People are so prejudiced," Nettie said, with a sage shake of her crisp brown curls and a little scornful pout of her cherry-red lips that made her look very like a naughty defiant child and more bewitchingly pretty than ever.

"And very wise and good people too, dear," her mother interposed, in mild correction.

"Your own father, I fear——" Her voice faltered, and she bent her head a little to hide the dimness of her eyes, Vance thought.

"Before either of them could speak, she went on quietly, "I think Mr. Singleton is quite right Nettie; prejudice apart, it will be a much easier and pleasanter thing to say, 'I have succeeded in my profession; look at the solid result!' than merely to mention that he intends to adopt a mode of life utterly unknown to them, and held by their world in very slight esteem."

"Exactly so," the young man agreed, with grateful eagerness—it was delightful to have his own vague floating ideas so charmingly put.

"And, if I make an utter failure, it will be so much easier and pleasanter not to mention it at all."

"Ah, but you will not fail!" Nettie said, with consoling decision.

So the bond was signed and the most important step in Vance Singleton's life was finally taken.

After this, he was very little at Nettleton until the end came.

He had never really worked at anything before.

But under Mrs. Clare and Nettie's instructions he worked like a Trojan.

Perhaps to the uninitiated it may seem that the life for which he was preparing was such mere child's-play that his exertions were superfluous and unnecessary.

Never was greater mistake made.

Unflagging exertion, inexhaustible patience, and an attention that never wandered from his task—all these his instructresses exacted, and all these he tried to give, with the satisfactory result of pleasing them at last.

"A short country engagement, and then for town and fame!" Nettie said, with real triumph in her tone; while Mrs. Clare added, as her quota of the reward of merit—

"And then you can reveal your secret and astonish the family circle at home."

Vance shuddered a little at the closing words, which were by no means so pleasant as poor Mrs. Clare thought.

In his mind's eye the young fellow saw a grotesquely horrible picture of the consternation produced by his words—Captain Bruce's gray pallor, Cristine's icy disgust, his mother's ready tears and wail over the disgrace he had brought upon them all

He could not even count on Nora's sympathy, for, since Arthur Beaupre's death, Nora had grown not hard, but cold and strange and apathetic, so that nothing seemed to rouse or interest her.

When he reached home that night, he fully expected to be questioned as to his long absence, badgered, suspected, and rendered generally uncomfortable.

For once, no one seemed even to know that he had been away.

One absorbing interest pervaded the whole house and swallowed up all other considerations.

Lord de Gretton had proposed to Nora, and had been accepted.

Vance could hardly believe his ears when almost before he had time to remove his overcoat or exchange a greeting word with her, his mother told him, in tones that literally trembled with excess of joy and pride, what she called "the great and glorious news."

He stared at her for a second or so; her flushed face, her sparkling eyes, the feverish excitement of her whole manner, forbade the idea that she was simply jesting; and yet, if it were not a joke, what was it?

"How stupid you are, Vance!" she said sharply. "It is well I prepared you.

"I hope you will be readier with your congratulations to the future Lady de Gretton."

"Lord de Gretton!" Vance repeated slowly—and for once he looked exceedingly stupid; for he could not collect his wandering wits or take in the strange idea at all. "Lord de Gretton.

"Why, he is as old as the governor, and as wicked as——"

"For shame, Vance!" she interrupted, with an angry frown.

"A man should scorn to repeat the gossip of the scandalmongers.

"Lord de Gretton is a gentleman in the best sense of the word. And, as for the slight disparity of years between them, dear Nora is too sensible a girl not to see that that only enhances the compliment he pays her. It is on the right side, and makes him in every way her superior, as her lord and master should be."

"And Arthur Beaupre—has she forgotten him?" the young man ventured, when at last, for lack, not of words, but breath, Mrs. Bruce came to an abrupt pause.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Scientific and Useful.

Boiling Meat.—Boiling fast renders meat hard because the excessive action of heat causes the albumen of the meat to set solid, crisps up the fleshy fibres and prevents heat having a gradual access to the interior.

Wind and Electricity.—A correspondent suggests the use of wind-wheels to drive dynamo-electric machines to decompose water. He would store the resulting gases in suitable holders, to be used when desired for lighting purposes, or for heating, or for any employment for which such gases may be available.

Tobacco Cooler.—A New York cigar dealer has invented a 'tobacco refrigerator,' for keeping the weed fresh and moist while exposed for sale. It is a cigar-stand and tobacco-box combined, made of polished white metal, and divided in the centre by two perforated partitions, between which is placed a wet sponge.

Action of Wood.—It is stated that some kinds of woods, although of great durability in themselves, act upon each other to their mutual destruction. Experiments with cypress and walnut and cypress and cedar prove that they will rot each other when joined together, but on separation the decay will cease, and the timbers remain perfectly sound for a long period.

Luminous Paint.—A pure white luminous paint is produced by mixing 40 parts of lake varnish, obtained as described, with 6 parts of prepared baric sulphate, 6 parts of prepared calcic carbonate, 12 parts of prepared zinc-sulphide white, and 36 parts of calcic sulphide in a luminous condition, in an oil vessel and therein worked into a coarse emulsion, which is then ground fine between rollers.

Incombustible Paper.—Asbestos of the best quality is treated with potassium permanganate, and then with sulphuric acid. Ninety-five per cent. of such asbestos is mixed with five per cent. of wood-pulp in water containing borax and glue. A fireproof ink is made of platinous chloride and oil of lavender, mixed for writing with Indian ink and gum, and for printing with lamp-black and varnish.

Farm and Garden.

Stable Manure.—Stable manure is often spoken of as the standard fertilizer and a complete manure in itself. It is probably so for corn, but for wheat and other small grains phosphate of lime is usually needed, and, on sandy soils, potash. This is shown by the fact that manure alone creates a heavy growth of straw without proportionate increase to grain.

Carbolic Acid.—A bottle of carbolic acid should be kept in every farm house, not merely as a disinfectant, but as a wash for wounds and sores. For any purpose it should be diluted with water. Its power to destroy fungus growths makes carbolic acid invaluable in pruning orchards of pear, plum, or peach, where blight or disease is suspected. The pruning shears should be frequently dipped in carbolic acid water.

Eggs.—There is a vast difference in the flavor of eggs. Hens fed on clean, sound grain and kept on clean grass run, give much finer flavored eggs than those that have access to stable and manure heaps, and eat all kinds of filthy food. Hens feeding on oily species of fish and onions, flavor their eggs accordingly, the same as cows eating onions or cabbage, or drinking offensive water, impart a bad taste in milk and butter.

Over-Feeding.—In some cases over-feeding of fowls causes them to become too fat, which not only prevents the hen from laying but breeds disease. Especially is this the case when they are confined and have no exercise. It may be mentioned that for persons who live in the city and keep a few fowls the small breeds are best, as they do not fatten as readily as the large kinds. Leghorns and Hamburgs, both small breeds, are not only beautiful in plumage but are non-sitters and lay more eggs than any other breeds.

Top-Dressing.—The following formula is given for preparing a special fertilizer as top-dressing for an orchard: Two hundred pounds of bone dust and three hundred pounds sulphate of potash. This gives some sixty to seventy pounds of potash, fifty to sixty of lime (from the bones) and ten to twenty pounds of nitrogen, with some magnesia in the potash and fertilizer, all of which are called for to afford nourishment on insufficient soils, as the flesh of most fruits contain much potash as well as lime in combination with the fruity acids, and the seeds phosphoric acid.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

SIXTY-THIRD YEAR.

SATURDAY EVENING, DEC. 8, 1883.

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LEARNING AND PEDANTRY.

Among the different species of pedants, there are two or three which are most prominent, and which do not claim, but force themselves on our attention. There is the ignorant pedant, and the semi learned pedant, and the learned pedant; all of them have equal assurance, but not equal ability to support it.

It is rather difficult to say which of them is preferable—he who professes to know what he does not know; he who, possessing a little knowlege, is always retailing it; or he who is really learned, and withal superlatively anxious that you should know it; who talks of physics and metaphysics with eternal volubility; who despises all who cannot argue, and yet cannot brook any opposition.

The ignorant pedant is exposed to many disasters. While uttering his counterfeit learning he is often detected by a keen inspector, and sometimes must feel abased by a consciousness of his own ignorance; still, however, he may support his character by talking intelligibly, and using a certain bead-roll of scientific terms—indeed, in this the whole art consists. One who pronounces so readily and so precisely the terms of science, may well be supposed perfectly acquainted with their meaning; but, alas! words and ideas have sometimes no connection.

The ignorant pedant is somewhat clever in escaping detection, as he employs the whole vocabulary of science (though in a strange manner) in defence of his opinions. He overwhelms his opponents, not with arguments, but with wonderful words; they cannot reply, because they really know not what to reply to. Thus he gains the victory, and feels emboldened to attempt future conquests.

The semi-learned pedant is one who knows nothing of comparing his intellectual possessions with those of others; he knows a little not generally known, and he thinks himself marvelously wise, so wise that he is above confutation, and will not degrade himself to refute an opponent, but magnanimously despise him, or inwardly pity his ignorance, while he feels elated with his own fancied superiority of knowledge.

Really, some of this class are the most obstinate and impenetrable creatures existing; able to trace an argument a little way, but unable to pursue it, they are impervious to conviction, and to submit to be instructed is to admit their own ignorance.

Some of these pedants, when they do engage in argument, employ tactics peculiar to themselves; they wander from one subject to another to perplex their antagonist, and deny the most cogent argument; nay, sometimes ignorantly resist demonstration to startle him. They know little of arguing for truth's sake; all they know is arguing for victory.

As to the ignorant pedant, he is only deserving of contempt; for not only does he invest himself with unmerited honors, but exposes learning itself to ridicule; and as to the semi-learned pedant, if he would reflect on those master-minds who have possessed, and do now possess, stores of knowledge to which his scanty stock is not worthy to be compared, and remember that others are at least as well informed as himself, he would abate his arrogance, and finding his intellectual superiority not so vast as he imagined, lower the tone of his colloquies, and talk of other subjects as well as remote history, or abstruse points of philosophy, the substratum of matter, or the essence of his existence.

SANCTUM CHAT.

AMONG recent patents issued is one for the manufacture of paper from the common grasses of this country, and the inventor claims that paper made by this process will be softer, more transparent, and much cheaper than paper made from linen stock. He estimates that an acre of ground will produce from 30,492 to 66,340 pounds of green grass, and this, in turn, will yield about 3,711 pounds of superior paper.

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THE depth of sleep has been the novel subject of investigation by two German physicians, working upon the principle that the depth of sleep is proportional to the sound required to awaken. Ingenious experiments showed that, with a perfectly healthy man, slumber during the first hour is very light; after an hour and a quarter the depth of sleep increases rapidly, and reaches its maximum at one and three-quarter hours. The slumber then lightens gradually, but reaction into deeper sleep occurs after five hours and a half of repose, after which gradual awakening proceeds. Imperfect health or unusual exertion produced marked irregularities.

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ACCORDING to some statistics lately published by a Berlin paper, the imperial revenue for the year 1882-3 profited to the extent of 1,056,838 marks from the practice of card-playing, no fewer than 3,121,846 packs of cards having been bought and used in Germany during the twelve months. It was mainly owing to the efforts of Prince Bismarck when Prussian member of the old diet at Frankfort, that public gaming tables in Germany were abolished, but the vice which he endeavored to put down was merely thus compelled to assume a new form.

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YOU often hear boys and girls say words when they are vexed that sound as if made up of a snarl, a whine, and a bark. Such a voice often expresses more than the heart feels. Often, even in mirth, one gets a voice or tone that is sharp, and it sticks to him through life. Such persons get a sharp voice for home use, and keep their best voice for those they meet elsewhere. We would say to all boys and girls, "Use your best-voice at home. Watch it day by day, as a pearl of great price, for it will be worth more to you than the best pearl in the sea. A kind voice is a lark's song to a hearth and home. Train it to sweet tones now, and it will keep in tune through life."

—

A DENTIST of experience thus discoursed to a reporter in a neighboring city: "It is both wrong and foolish to deceive a child about such things. If he is told that he is not to be hurt at all, and then is badly hurt, he will never take your word again, and will hate you, and will resort to almost any means to keep away from a dental office afterward. I always tell a child the operation will hurt a little, but that I will be careful. I can usually play on a child's pride, and make him very brave. If he is handled properly, he will train his pluck for the most painful operation, and usually when he is dismissed from the chair is surprised that the pain has been no more severe. You know the extent of pain, or, indeed, of everything, is apt to be measured by comparison with one's expectation of what is to be done."

—

THE regular army in England foots up 190 000 men. The reserve is about 30,000 strong, and the militia about 149,000, of whom 25,000 are in the militia reserve, and there are about 180,000 enrolled volunteers. The actual combatant force is very different; of the 190 000 regulars, more than 92,000 are abroad; of the militia, 28,000 are deficient from the paper strength. Supposing war broke out, having completed the garrison of foreign fortresses, such as Gibraltar, Malta, and Aden, and England's coaling stations, requiring at least 10,000 exclusive of India, and having afforded India a reinforcement of 10,000 men, the problem would arise how to meet the peril with the remainder. Having apportioned 6,000 men for each of the fortresses of Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Dover, and 10,000 for the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland, Capt. Hagier, the great military authority, states there would be no more than 30,000 troops to strike a blow against the enemy.

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WHEN it was known that royalty was to be present at a charity fair in London, and that any one would have a chance of buying a rose from the Princess of Wales, the response was overwhelming. The great success of the night was the Princess of Wales. There was such a crush that for a time one could only catch a glimpse of the ladies who had been chosen to assist the Princess, in two large mirrors which hung in the booths at such an incline as to reflect the figures and faces that flitted before them. She wore an exquisite white costume. The short petticoat was a mass of lace and white silk, and the corsage glittered with beads. At the throat was a cherry-colored velvet ribbon sparkling with diamonds, and throwing into relief a diamond necklace. The feathery puffs of light brown hair were ornamented with diamond horseshoes. A correspondent says that no mob could possibly behave worse than this throng of fashionably-attired people when it realized that the Princess was on duty, and would hand over a rose for anything from a half crown upward. She had to retire for a few minutes, while gentlemen besought the people to be less demonstrative, and to fall into line.

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To the young man of limited means, who likes once in a while to join routs, the dress-suit is a mercy. The ladies, with their sensitiveness about wearing their party dresses too often, are put to a great expense that to many a man would be frequently ruinous. But if a young man can once secure the ready capital to invest in a dress suit, or can find a tailor with a sufficiently trustful nature, his wardrobe is supplied. In fact, a dress suit, covered by the spots and dust of many campaigns, if only neatness has been satisfied by a sufficient cleansing and brushing, is more "correct" than one fresh from the tailor's hands. It looks as if its owner had seen something of society, as if the present occasion was not his first venture into the region of balls, parties and dinners. Men will be very slow to adopt any new-fangled notions about the advantages of knee-breeches and slashed doublets, with all fuss and feathers, even if they do set off neat legs and fine forms. The regulation dress suit is just what is wanted in this hurried American life, where the men at least cannot stop to "fix up," even if they have the money.

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THE following description of the darker side of life in the metropolis, appears in a New York paper: "Yonder in the dark bowels of the town is a life we never pierce. Think of the judges putting off litigants with the statement that the jails are full of people who cannot get bail, and whom it is necessary to try! Think of those whose wail of injustice never can reach the public press, so far above them are the smallest facilities of influence! Think of the trade in childhood going along monotonously, of the lives that never saw an innocent beginning, of multitudes who cannot ask for bread in English, of the legion who are fed from swill-barrels, of the warmth that thousands never know except at the saloon stove, and lounging there like moths to the lamp, counting every heart-beat of the saloon-keeper to hear when he should say, "Depart,"—that man of grand surroundings. Can we wonder that saloon-keepers reach so many of the offices? How idle it is to exclaim upon the man in the palace whose thousand vassals have nothing but a vote. Here, should Charity rush like a river, it would still be shallow. Rise, Charity, and be our Pharisee!"

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AMONG the minor social beliefs long ago elevated to a point of orthodoxy, is the notion that women enjoy shopping for itself, irrespective of utility or necessity. Yet half the time spent in joking over this female penchant, if put into practical observation, might convince the average male that this well-established belief covered a fallacy. The daily thronged shops need not be so very misleading if one considers that everybody and everything, from the oldest household article to the newest baby must come under the oversight of the presiding woman, and that, by no means, are all women endowed in a manner to cope with and make easy the manifold duties they have to perform. Thousands of women know they must have something for this, that and the other thing or person, without knowing what they can have; and they haunt the shops, hoping that the season's novelties will suggest some compromise between their necessities and the limit of their expenditure. But they find this task anything but a pleasure. Even that type of woman which haunts the newly-furnished shops from idle, restless curiosity—a type, by the way, more rare than is generally supposed—she who, when at home, is always overhauling, fussing and revamping, through sheer lack of concentrative and trained faculty, even she does not quite love it. Her rasped and harrowed nerves, when she comes home, gainsay the supposition. Indeed, no other purely feminine work, except, perhaps, sewing, at all compares with shopping for using up a woman's nervous force.

OUR LIFE.

BY J. I.

Her white little hand is resting
On the arm that held it of old,
And he thinks it is only the night breeze
That makes it so soft and cold.

Her eyes into his are gazing—
Eyes ever so faithful to him ;
And he thinks it a shadowy twilight
That makes it so strange and dim.

Her pretty face turns toward him :
Ah, when did her face turn away ?
And he thinks it the silvery moonlight
That makes it so faint and gray.

Oh, spirit that lingers and falters,
Take courage and whisper "Good-bye."
A life?—why a life is nothing,
When millions each minute die.

With millions each minute dying,
What matter's one life or death?
One fragile and tender existence?
One tremulous passing breath?

A life? Why a life is nothing!
What matters tho' one burn dim?
Alas for the folly of reason—
One life is the world to him!

Uncle Robert.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

I WAS orphaned in my childhood, and my mother's sister had educated me and stood to me in the place of mother for nineteen years.

Uncle Robert, my father's brother had written to me often, was lavish in presents sent from his city home to our quiet village, and paid us brief visits every few years.

But I had known him but little when that last visit ended in an attack of pneumonia, short and fatal.

I wept for a kind uncle, but upon Aunt Maria's face was sadness indescribable; a sudden shadowing of the fair, placid face, that the snows of fifty years had not darkened as the few weeks of sickness and sorrow had done.

Sitting beside me, caressing my hand, seeming scarcely to know she was speaking or thinking aloud, my aunt softly told me my uncle's story.

"When your mother was but seventeen, our father died, leaving our property in the care of his partner, your grandfather Ogden.

"The firm was a wealthy one, and both your Uncle Robert and your father, Raymond Ogden, were with their father in business.

"I was ten years my sister's senior, and Robert Ogden was as many years older than his brother.

"As was but natural, the families were very intimate, and when Ellie and I came to this quiet country village to live, our guardian and his sons were our frequent guests.

"Our mother presided over the household, and for several months there was no break in the happy, though uneventful life we led.

"Then the first of a series of calamities befel us.

"Raymond disgraced his father's name by being one of a party of men who were arrested in a gambling house.

"I do not wish to shake your reverence for your father's memory, and I believe the youthful wrong was sincerely repented and atoned for in later life, but the fact remains the same.

"His father, a stern man of strict integrity, who abhorred all games of cards as direct inventions of the father of evil, gave his son warning that a second offence of this kind would cost him his inheritance and his home.

"I do not know the particulars of that second offence.

"Raymond said it was only a payment of debts of honor contracted months before, but a second offence there was, and Mr. Ogden turned his son from his house, with a sufficient sum of money to start in business for himself.

"Ellie grieved sorely, and I began then to suspect that Raymond had won her love.

"But we never spoke of that, and mother never said she objected to the letters that passed between Raymond and my sister.

"I think she was sorry for the handsome, impulsive boy, who had been almost like a son to her since his very infancy, and that she looked upon both the young folks as mere children.

"But your Uncle Robert even then began to find Ellie's sweet face the fairest in the world, her clear voice the most musical.

"She was very lovely, very winsome, my sweet young sister, and Robert was but little over thirty, and heart-whole, till she filled his ideal of gentle womanhood.

"He was all that a man could wish to be—child, all!

"Noble in every impulse, brave, true, a Christian in the highest sense, a gentleman in every word and action.

"Not so handsome as Raymond, graver and more reserved, but a man of honor.

"And Ellie did respect him, did realize that he was a man of a thousand, but she did not love him.

"It was so strange!

"Robert loving with all the pure, noble strength of his heart, and such love falling upon an irresponsive heart, that could look calmly on him, and bring only a respectful esteem to meet his devotion.

"But there was no thought of all these heart histories until Mr. Ogden died suddenly.

"His will was in Robert's hands, and the day after the funeral, before it was opened, he came to our cottage, and had a long interview with mother.

We knew then, for the first time, that my father had left a letter of trust in his partner's hands, requesting Ellie when she came of age, to marry Robert Ogden.

"The love of the young merchant had been revealed to our father, before his death, but by his own request Ellie was to know nothing of it until she was old enough to understand the meaning of the love he offered her.

"This was one letter, and Mr. Ogden's will strengthened its commands.

"Robert was to inherit all the property but a thousand pounds left to Raymond, and his father begged him to win Ellie for his wife, and comply with her father's requests.

"I think, dear, your grandfather wished to keep our patrimony in the firm, that had existed through three generations, and Ellie, as Robert's wife would have the same interests.

"She was but a child at twenty, and she sincerely liked Robert.

"Do not blame her that she mistook this quiet esteem for the affection her lover craved, and consented to be his wife.

"All the preparations for the wedding went forward for a year.

"We did the sewing at home, mother and I stitching at the dainty linen and cambric embroidering, and ruffling, and filling a great closet with our finest needlework.

"Raymond had vanished after his father's death leaving even his pitiful legacy, and we knew nothing of his whereabouts.

"Ellie sorrowed as if a brother wandered in disgrace and poverty, the secret of her own heart even then a sealed book to herself.

"Robert was a most devoted lover, with that rare delicacy of wooing that never startled Ellie by bursts of eloquence, or any sudden spasms of love-making.

"Every act that could contribute to her happiness, every thoughtful attention, every courteous word, was offered so gently, so tenderly; that he never startled the young heart he wooed so fondly, and yet every time he came to the cottage his own love deepened.

"There was no influence exerted over your mother.

"It was her own mistake throughout, and we did not suspect the error.

"It was but natural she should be shy and reticent, as she was quiet and gentle from a child.

"Nobody guessed the young heart's apathy when she accepted her lover's caresses submissively, making so little response.

"She was his willing companion in walks or drives, wore the jewels he gave her, selected his favorite flowers for the sitting-room when he requested it, and read the books sent her.

"What could he ask more?

"I alone guessed his heart-hunger—I alone in the cruel agony of my lost love, guessed his; for I—crippled, disfigured, hideous— I loved Robert Ogden.

"Lying in the churchyard, my heart in his grave, he has never guessed the love lying at his feet through nearly forty long years—never!

"In another life, will he know? I cannot tell.

"In this life he never found out the secret I kept so faithfully.

"By the strength of my own love I read the weakness and apathy of Ellie's. I knew that, sooner or later, the time would come when the love that nestles in every woman's heart would spring to life in Ellie's. But would it turn to Robert?

"I wearied myself over the question as the year of mourning drew to a close, and we fitted the bright bridal fabrics to Ellie's slender figure and named a wedding day.

"It was very near, only a few days off, when Robert came to the cottage one afternoon in the early summer time.

"I had seen Ellie going to the rustic arbor in the garden an hour before, and I went to call her, never heeding that Robert followed me.

"'As we neared the arbor, we saw a boat lying at the river bank at the foot of the garden and heard a man's voice in the arbor.

"'You did not know you loved me!' the voice said, bitterly.

"'You will marry my brother, loving me, because your word is passed, and I may wander over the face of the earth, disinherited—out-cast!

"'Oh, Ellie, I have loved you so long! I tried to smother my love when I knew my brother, my father's heir, had won you, but I cannot.

"'My darling! my darling!'

"A grasp of iron held me motionless while Raymond Ogden spoke! A low voice whispered—

"Let Ellie speak!"

"Then we heard Ellie's voice, clear and sweet—

"Raymond, you must not speak to me. I have promised to be your brother's wife.

"I cannot be false enough to break so noble a heart as Robert Ogden's.'

"'You do not love him?" Raymond persisted.

"'There is no one living whom I believe to be so noble and true. Raymond you must not stay.'

"'Why?"

"'Because you are white, trembling, fearful; because you cannot trust your own strength—because you are afraid you will say you love me!

"'You do love me!

"'You cannot deny it!

"'Ellie, look me in the face and say—"Raymond I do not love you," and I will go, and never see your face again.'

"She tried to speak the words, faltering the name, and breaking down in a fit of passionate sobbing.

"Then Robert released me, and walked quietly into the arbor.

"'Raymond, he said, in a grave voice, 'why have you hidden from me?'

"'Why? Why does a beggar hide from the millionaire spending his inheritance?' was the answer.

"'You're no beggar, Raymond. Your father's will was burned as soon as the legacies that were entrusted to me were paid. Your half of his estate lies in your name at the banker's. I have advertised for you.'

"'I have seen the advertisements; I kept away because'—and Raymond's voice faltered—'I loved your promised wife. I am not altogether a scoundrel, Robert.

"'I kept away while I believed Ellie loved you, though I have been near her oftener than she ever suspected.

"'But to-day I saw her from the river sitting here so listless—so unlike a happy bride, that the temptation to probe her heart was irresistible. Robert, marry her if you will; her heart is mine.'

"'Ellie,' the grave voice asked, 'does my brother speak the truth?'

"The clear, searching eyes rested mournfully upon the flushed, downcast face. But Ellie lifted it bravely.

"'I never meant to deceive you Robert,' she said, softly; 'I thought I loved you until Raymond came.'

"'And now?'

"His tone was bitter, and his face like that of a man facing death.

"'I will be faithful to you,' Ellie said, 'and I will try to forget.'

"'Try to forget! Child! child! will any man take to his heart a wife trying to forget? Heaven forbid I should so wrong you or myself Raymond, you have won what I would give my life to possess. May God bless you both,' said Robert.

"He was gone before we could speak, and for ten years we never looked upon Robert Ogden's face.

"Raymond found his portion, as he had been told he would, but it was a year later before Ellie became his wife.

"Every maidenly impulse cried out against any haste in the wedding, and they went abroad for three years.

"But Robert never looked again upon Ellie, until he came to a funeral where her fair young face rested against the coffin-pillows.

"I stood beside him while he cut one of the golden curls from the clusters around the still, white face, and pressed his lips to the ones that had exiled him for ten long years.

"Yesterday, when I put flowers upon your Uncle Robert's breast, I saw a fine gold chain around his neck.

"Do not blame me that I drew it out to see what rested upon his heart, and found a locket enclosing the lock of golden hair he cut from Ellie's head when she lay in her coffin fifteen years ago."

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There was a long silence in the room, and my aunt then rose softly and left it.

But never again was lifted from her gentle, disfigured face the shadow that fell there when she looked for the last time upon the face of my Uncle Robert.

In the Old Days.

BY WILSON BENNOR.

POOR little Lina. She lived with Mr. and Mrs. Kingsford.

They had taken her from a very miserable home, and from parents who were about as utterly degraded as people well could be.

Their motives were good—and their treatment of her had been kind.

They had educated her much more thoroughly than was absolutely necessary, if her mission was to be entirely that of a housemaid.

And she was tidy and trim, and did credit to them in every way; but they could not quite forget her antecedents—could not think of her as of some decent man and woman's child.

The father had gone to the dogs long ago; but the mother—a red-eyed creature, wrapped in rags, now and then haunted the house.

In childhood, Lina used to give her odd pennies and anything that was lawfully hers.

Of late, she gave a large proportion of her wages.

Vainly Mrs. Kingsford preached and forbade; the wretched mother was never admitted to the kitchen—but somehow Lina met her, and was good to her.

There were some who wondered that she remained with the Kingsfords.

She might have taken a much better position, for she really had a first-rate education.

But there was a bond of which she was hardly conscious, for a girl is long in discovering the real state of her own heart.

The only son, Charles Kingsford, was just her age.

When she entered it a very little creature, he, a good-natured boy, had been very kind to her.

Since they had grown up, of course, their different stations in life kept them apart; but there was still every now and then some occasion for kindly speech on his part, or respectful attention on hers.

She had no suitors.

Those of her own class thought her airish, and men she would have admired knew her only as Mrs. Kingsford's hired-girl.

Her heart was left free to wind itself about the only young man of whom she had seen much.

In fact, Lina had fallen in love with her young master, and now and then her humble pillow was wet with tears at the thought of her folly.

"If he should ever find it out I should die," the poor girl said to herself. "But he never can—he doesn't waste his thoughts on me, of course. Why should he—who could have almost any pretty lady he chose to ask?"

And these romantic dreams would come into the girl's heart, and she would fancy herself doing the handsome youth some great service at the price of her life; and then, as she expired in his arms, he would know all, and kiss her just once—perhaps only in a sort of pity—but in that kiss her soul would wing its way to heaven, and there wait for him to join her.

All women believe they will be loved in heaven, if not here; often, too, by some worthless rascal, who has no chance of getting there.

Charlie Kingsford was not a worthless rascal, but he was a very wild young fellow—wilder than people knew.

His father would have groaned with horror could he have guessed at some of his son's escapades—at his debts and liabilities, and at the sort of company he sometimes kept; but there was some good in the boy's heart, and he proved it by never making sly love to Lina.

Most men who had been as much in love with her as he was, would have done so without scruple.

Meanwhile, away from home, he led the life wild young men lead in a great city, and got himself into one small scrape after another, until, at last, trouble fell upon him—or rather, he pulled it down upon himself.

There was nothing for it but to leave home and friends, at least for a while; and, worst of all, he could not ask aid from his parents, who must not know the life their son had been leading.

He was wretched and anxious. Indeed, he knew not what to do.

It was a stormy night.

The wind rattled the shutters and doors, and the rain beat sharply against the window-panes, with almost force enough to break them.

Mr. and Mrs. Kingsford had been at a prayer-meeting held at the church they attended, and a collection had been taken up for some special purpose.

The money—five hundred dollars—was given in charge of Mr. Kingsford, who instantly, on his return, locked it up in the drawer of a desk in the back-parlor—a room that was the general evening sitting-room, and where family prayers were held, and which had not only two windows, but a little door leading into the garden of the old-fashioned house that he occupied.

After this he rang the bell, and his son, the cook, and Lina, entered as usual.

Prayers were read, and immediately after the old people retired.

On this occasion Charlie also sought his room at once, and to Lina was left the task of locking up the house and seeing that all the fires were safe.

She was certain to be careful and to forget nothing.

But when Mrs. Kingsford had been asleep for at least an hour, she suddenly awoke with a start.

Her room was directly over the back-parlor, and she distinctly heard the sound of voices below.

Whose could they be?

Women's, plainly.

Had anything happened that cook and Lina were about?

Throwing a shawl over her shoulders, and thrusting her feet into slippers, she stole downstairs.

The back-parlor door was closed, but it had a keyhole.

Through this the light streamed in one long golden ray.

Mrs. Kingsford softly approached the bright beam, and, kneeling down, darkened it with her eye.

One cannot see much through a keyhole, but one glance was sufficient.

A woman, in a miserable bonnet and shawl, sitting before the fire, and drinking a cup of tea—Lina's mother.

Mrs. Kingsford at once burst into the room and stood before the pair—for Lina was there also, of course.

The kitchen teapot stood upon the grate, and the poor woman had a plate of odds and ends in her lap.

Mrs. Kingsford gave one look, and then turned to Lina.

"I knew it was a liberty," said Lina; "but the other fires were all out, Mrs. Kingsford, and it was so cold. It's only my mother, ma'am."

"I am well aware of that," said the lady. "Will you tell your mother that we are going to shut up for the night?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Lina.

The woman, who seemed to expect nothing but treatment of this sort, arose and put her shawl about her.

Lina opened the door—a cold blast swept in, and the lady shuddered.

"I shall catch my death, I know," she said. "Lock up, well, Lina," and don't let this occur again."

And as she hurried upstairs, her heart smote her a little to hear the woman stumble forth into the storm.

"But we cannot be hospitable to all without suffering for it," she said, by way of easing her conscience. "If we were to do what almost seems our Christian duty, we should be called crazy."

Then she went to bed.

And Lina, having seen her mother out into the storm, put out the light, and crouched down the grate, crushing back her tears.

The miserable woman she had just parted from had never been a mother to her save in name, but she wept for her—yes, and for herself also.

In a moment more she heard the sound of steps approaching, and shrank back into the shadows.

Yet despite this, it was an hour before she went to bed, and then she crept upstairs shivering and trembling, overcome with horror.

What was it she had seen?

Who was it that had come into the room and what had she seen there?

Whatever it was, she said nothing of it to anyone. The next morning she was up as usual, and found Mrs. Kingsford up before her.

"My son is called away on business," she said. "It is something very unexpected," and she ordered a more than usually comfortable breakfast.

Charlie's story had imposed upon his parents.

They knew nothing of the reasons for his sudden departure.

But something was the matter with Lina that morning.

Her hand trembled so that she could scarcely pass the cups, and never once did she glance towards Charles Kingsford.

At last he arose, kissed his mother, shook hands with his father, and pausing, looked at Lina.

She only looked at the back of Mrs. Kingsford's chair, where she still respectfully kept her place.

Then, "Good-bye, Lina," he said.

And she answered—

"Good-bye, sir," and that was all.

He was gone, as she believed, for ever.

His friends had no idea of the desperate flight he was bent upon.

They fancied it a mere short business journey, and stood at the door and nodded adieu to him.

But Lina knew more.

"He will never return," she said to herself.

Two hours after, Mr. Kingsford called Lina into the back parlor, and shut the door.

Standing before the desk in which he had deposited the money he held in trust, the night before, he pointed to it.

"Do you see this, Lina?" he asked, showing her the broken lock.

"Yes, sir," whispered Lina, with parched lips.

"I have been robbed, and of money that was not my own," said Mr. Kingsford. "Lina, do you know anything of this?"

Lina turned paler than before, but made no answer.

"I do not think you guilty," said Mr. Kingsford; "but you know your mother is not a respectable woman, and she was here last night. Did you know of her taking the money?"

"Sir," cried Lina, "my mother did not take it—I swear that."

"It is possible that you do not know she did," said Mr. Kingsford. "I give you the benefit of the doubt; but you left her alone to get that tea. I shall have her arrested at once."

"My poor mother is innocent of this, at least," said Lina. "I tell you that I swear it; I mean what I say."

"Then you know who took it," said Mr. Kingsford. "I see that in your face; confess. But, nonsense; it was your mother. And I tell you, Lina, I must take prompt measures to arrest her."

"I tell you my mother is innocent," said Lina. "It is I who am guilty—arrest me."

"You," cried Mr. Kingsford. "Oh, Lina! after your good bringing up! Well, well, bad blood will out; but I have no wish to punish you.

"Restore the money and leave us. Of course we can give you no character, but we will not prosecute you. I suppose your mother's influence has led you astray."

"My mother knows nothing about it," said Lina, "and the money is miles away by this time. I cannot give it back; do what you choose with me."

And sinking on her knees beside a chair, she buried her face in her hands and burst into tears.

Lina was tried for the theft; and sentenced, in consequence of her previous good character, to the lightest possible term of imprisonment.

The Kingsfords believed that she had taken the money at her mother's instigation, but there was no proof whatever.

Mr. Kingsford paid the money out of his own pocket, and there the matter ended, or seemed to end.

As for Charles Kingsford, no one heard of him for years.

His mother suffered great anxiety on his account, and his father believed him dead; but after all this grief and mourning, home he came one day—a brown man with a long beard, whom no one knew at first.

He sat by the fireside, and was questioned and asked questions.

At last he said—

"And what has become of poor Lina? Has she married?"

And then out came the story of the theft and its punishment.

"It proves," said the mother, "that what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh. All my careful training could not make an honest girl out of a thief's child."

The words were scarcely out of her lips when her son—the great bearded man of whom she was so proud—clasped his hands over his eyes and burst into tears like any woman.

"My God!" he cried, "has Lina suffered this for me?

"Father, she was as innocent as angel. It was I who robbed your desk. I was driven to the deed by the shadow of a horrible disgrace.

"I know you could afford to lose it for the time, and I intended to restore it whenever I was able.

"I have come to do it now, and ask your forgiveness.

"I was a worse boy than you know in those old times, but I have repented, and I hope, amended.

"This is a terrible blow to fall on you who trusted me so, but I also have received one. I have been the cause of ruin to one who was almost an angel.

"Father, when I had robbed your desk and had the money in my hand, I saw her glide out of the room like a spirit. She had been there.

"She must have known of my evil deed, and she sacrificed herself for me. I know why, mother—the poor child loved me, worthless as I was."

The poor parents were too greatly bewildered and too terribly shocked to say or do anything.

They could pardon their son as the father of old pardoned the prodigal—but for the poor girl, what could they do now?

Perhaps she was dead.

"Better that than the fall that had probably been hers, if she left prison alive," said the woman.

But Charles Kingsford knew better.

The heart that love made so strong, its own purity would protect.

True women may starve to death, but they never eat the bread of degradation.

He spent long months in searching for Lina, but he found her at last.

In a wretched room she sat sewing, by the light of a tallow candle, when the tap came at the door, and opening it, she found him standing there.

"Master Charles," she cried, "I never thought I should see you again."

"Lina!"

He said nothing more for a while.

Then they sat down near each other, and he looked at her.

The marks of sorrow were on her face, but it was as pure as that of any angel.

"Have you come to hate me for being the cause of such trouble?" he asked, at last. "I know all, Lina. Oh, Heaven! why did you do such a thing?"

"It was either mother or you," she said. "My poor mother was innocent, and I could not betray you."

"I am a better man than I was, Lina," he said. "And though I'm not half good enough for you, yet will you have me? I loved you in the old days, but pride got the better of me. Now I am only afraid you will despise me for what you know of me. I know you loved me once, Lina. Has all this blotted that love quite out?"

She said nothing, but he looked into her face, and took her hand and put it to his lips.

When Charles Kingsford sailed for his home in America, his wife went with him, and the mother's pride had been laid low.

For, as they parted on the steamer's deck, she kissed not only her son, but his wife also.

In this way she asked forgiveness—in this way received it freely.

Bertha's Choice.

BY WILSON BENNOR.

MISS BERTHA DEANE looked very admiringly at her full-length reflection in the dressing-mirror; then, with a sigh of satisfaction, turned round to her cousin Ethel, who sat regarding her somewhat as an ugly little boy might be supposed to contemplate a gorgeous-winged butterfly.

"I can just tell you, Ethel, I am more decided than ever to go in for a rich husband, when I look at myself and see how nice I am. Ain't I, now?"

She asked the question with a bewildering little smile, and a charming candor and honesty that completely robbed it of mean vanity.

"You are lovely, Bertie, and I feel sorry for the ineligible young men who are to come under the spell of your fascinations for the three months you are visiting us."

"Nonsense, you dear old girl! As if the 'ineligible young men' cannot stand it as well as I! Although, to comfort you, I will promise to have nothing to do with anyone that can't count his money by the hundreds of thousands."

Ethel gave a little gasp of horror at Bertha's high aspirations.

"That's just as true as gospel, Ethie. I positively have made up my mind to marry rich—that is what I came up to London for. You know I am pretty, and love handsome dresses, and enjoy all sorts of luxuries. Why shouldn't I have my carriage and horses, my box at the opera, my mansion in Belgravia, my carriage at Brighton, my diamonds and laces, as well as anyone else?"

She gave her skirts a little extra settling with a very determined touch, as if she expected Ethel to oppose her ambition.

"I certainly hope you'll attain to the height you desire, Bertie, although I cannot imagine who there is that can give you such an overplus of good things. It would take the fortune of a Rothschild to gratify you, you little rapacious fortune-hunter."

Bertha smiled, and nodded mysteriously.

"Well, you'll see. You shall be my bridesmaid when I marry the gentleman I have my eye on. Just wait—I shall get him."

She spoke with all the confidence of a beauty of eighteen, who felt that the world lay at her feet, to be had for the stooping and taking, and plain, practical Ethel was imbued with the contagion of the girl's positiveness.

"If the royal dower of beauty and grace is infallible, you surely will win your game, Bertie."

She looked with pardonable pride at the girl, as she stood there, a perfect Venus in her rounded grace and symmetry of form, and the lovely sweetness of the pure, pale face, with its full, ripe lips of glowing scarlet; its shadowy, dark eyes, now all alight with eagerness, that were at times veiled so splendidly by the heavily-lashed lids; its framework of jetty, shining hair with purple lights athwart it.

Verily, if youth, beauty, fresh, winning grace, native refinement, and intelligence were the passports to success, Bertha Deane's battle was already more than half fought.

"Thank you for your praises, Ethel—and really, I think myself I am too choice a jewel to remain outside of the finest setting. I'm awfully vain, ain't I?—and I suppose you think I'm as wicked as can be, don't you?"

Ethel's indulgent smile reassured her on that point.

"I think you are awfully wicked to refuse poor Will Elmott."

Bertha's eyes opened in honest surprise.

"Will Elmott! why, Ethel, are you crazy? Fancy me trying to manage on fifteen hundred a year."

Her look of mock distress was irresistibly comical.

"Then, there is Mr. Ross, Bertie. I know he is all ready to propose if you offer him the least encouragement. He's in business, and worth at least thirty thousand."

A silvery little laugh routed this charge.

"I tell you I am booked for half a million, Ethel, and I've my eye on the owner of it."

Ethel knit her brows in severe thought.

"A half million! Bertha, you are insane! There's not a man in London worth it that is unmarried."

Bertha tapped her little foot merrily.

"I know it."

"Then, who do you——merciful goodness, Bertha, you're not audacious enough to be presuming upon finding favor in the sight of that young nobleman who is expected at Mrs. Ellinger's?"

Ethel fairly gasped the words.

Bertha laughed and nodded.

"Exactly! I'll not have the slightest objection to being Lady Tresillian—would you?"

But the girl's daring audacity had fairly taken Ethel's breath away.

"But—but—you don't know anything about him. If he's old, and stout, and ugly, and bald-headed——"

Bertha made a charming little bow that effectually silenced her.

"He will yet remain Lord Algernon Tresillian, with a rent-roll of seventy thousand, and the owner of the finest estate in Cornwall, and a perfect palace in Park Lane."

Ethel leaned back among the cushions, perfectly discomfited, while Bertha smiled, and arched her stately neck like some warhorse who scents the battle from afar.

"Next Thursday three weeks, at Mrs. Ellinger's reception, given in honor of my lord's arrival, the siege will begin. You'll see!"

* * * * * *

"What did you say his name is, Bertha? You know who I mean—that handsome young man with the blonde whiskers."

Ethel nudged Bertha as, in the brief interval between the dances, the two girls found themselves together on a sofa in a corner of Mrs. Delmayne's drawing-room.

Bertha's eyes coolly followed the direction indicated.

"Oh, that's Mr. Desmond. Do you call him handsome?"

"I should think I did; and evidently he entertains some such opinion of you, judging from the way he looks over here."

A little flush surged over Bertha's face.

"Nonsense! you know perfectly well there are other people to be looked at besides me. Don't stand so near, please."

Ethel looked wonderingly up, surprised by the unwonted tartness in Bertha's voice and manner.

"I think I am right, however. Who is he, anyhow? I think he is perfectly elegant."

Bertha curled her lip.

"Your opinion is immaterial to me. As to who he is, how should I know? I heard some one say he was engaged in a mining business, I believe. Thanks, Mr. Delmayne—yes, I'm ready for the galop."

After that, no one heard her mention Mr. Desmond's name, often though he called to see her, often as he escorted her to places of amusement, and only Ethel knew the secret of Bertha's reticence, her alternating moods of sweetness and tartness, her sarcasm and tenderness, her gay merriment and downcast tearfulness.

Only Ethel, who knew that young Desmond was comparatively poor.

Those three weeks that intervened between then and Mrs. Ellinger's reception in honor of Lord Tresillian were quickly spent, and the afternoon preceding the great event, Bertha's dress came home, while the two girls were chatting in their room.

"Oh, isn't it lovely! Bertha, you surely will fascinate Lord Tresillian. Was there ever such a sweet shade of pink?"

Bertha deliberately examined it, so differently from her usual enthusiastic way.

"Oh, yes, it's pretty enough. I daresay there'll be handsomer dresses there, however."

And it was "pretty enough," so enhanced by Bertha's statuesque face and marble-white arms and throat, and among the very first to bow at her shrine was the lion of the evening, Algernon Tresillian, the rich baronet.

"I must congratulate you, Bertie," Ethel said as they drove home; "his lordship's devotion was very marked. I am sure I begin to think you will realize your ambition."

In the darkness she did not see the deep blush that spread over Bertha's face, nor the angry pallor that followed.

"Such a hideous old man; did you see how purple his face turned when he bowed?"

"Oh, Bertha, you forget how rich——"

"Do be still, Ethel. Can't you see I am dying with headache?"

So the spring days wore on, finding Bertha now jubilantly gay, now petulantly cross, now miserably wretched, until one April morning, there came a letter to her, written on heavy, cream-hued paper, bearing a crest at its heading, and subscribed "Tresillian."

A manly, straightforward letter, in which the estates in Cornwall, the house in Park Lane, the seventy thousand a year, were laid at her feet—on condition that she accepted their owner with them.

With the reading of that letter all of Bertha's unwonted irritation left her; her old sweetness came again; and yet—she refused him.

"And might I ask why?"

Lord Tresillian had begged an interview, and asked her the question.

"Because I cannot marry where I have no love to give. Because I love Harry Desmond, and have promised to become his wife."

She said it with proud authority, her eyes full of true tenderness, her lips trembling with emotion.

"Harry Desmond? The young gentleman with only a few hundreds a year?"

"The same, sir. If he is not rich in wealth, he is in love for me; in nobility of character, in greatness and goodness of soul. We shall be very happy."

The old gentleman's eyes twinkled good-humoredly.

"But I thought you wanted a rich husband? I can give you everything you want."

"I want nothing Harry's means cannot procure for me," she returned, proudly.

"Then I am to consider your answer as final? You positively prefer young Desmond and fifteen hundred a year to—to being Lady Tresillian, of Tresillian Court?"

A smile flitted across her sweet face.

"I'm afraid I do. But I thank you gratefully for the great honor you have offered me."

"Suppose I say you shall be Lady Tresillian? Not now, but some day——"

"It is useless to talk of it. I shall marry Mr. Desmond."

Then the curtains of the bay window parted, and the handsome young fellow who had won her, came into the room.

"My darling, I never can repay you for your sweet womanly allegiance to me. However, I shall unite with Lord Tresillian in urging upon you the necessity of considering yourself the future Lady Tresillian, although, until the death of my father, Lord Algernon, you will be plain Mrs. Desmond—Honorable Mrs. Desmond."

Bertha looked and listened in bewilderment.

"You'll not refuse me for a father-in-law, Bertha?—and you'll forgive us for our little effort at generalship. We heard you had sworn only to marry for money, but Harry discovered you had a loving, yearning heart that wealth alone never could satisfy; and so—well, you're contented with the way it has turned out? You'll admit we've outgeneralled you, you little mischief?"

And in her magnificent home Bertha is happier than the day is long.

From a Clergyman Seventy-one Years of Age.

A clergyman in Cleveland, O., seventy-one years of age, who had preached regularly nearly every Sunday for over fifteen years, says, in a letter dated February 8th, 1882, a few weeks after commencing the use of Compound Oxygen:

"My strength was equal to the work until about a year ago, when I began to fail, and had come to the conclusion that my work, if not my life, was nearly at an end. But now I am quite a new man; yes, the revitalizer has introduced new life into my almost dead organs. I can say that I am well, with the exception of a little soreness in my throat. Allow me to give thanks, first to God, and then to you, for this blessed hour of health."

Our "Treatise on Compound Oxygen," containing a history of the discovery and mode of action of this remarkable curative agent, and a large record of surprising cures in Consumption, Catarrh, Neuralgia, Bronchitis, Asthma, etc., and a wide range of chronic diseases, will be sent free. Address, DRS. STARKEY & PALEN, 1109 and 1111 Girard St., Philada.

The Picnic.

BY GEORGE ARNOLD.

"ARE you going to the picnic, Natalie?" Natalie Warwick was sitting languidly by the open window, a carved pearl fan in her hand, a white lace shawl thrown carelessly over her shoulders, a dusky eyed, crimson-cheeked brunette, who might have sat for the photograph of Cleopatra.

"I don't know whether I shall or not," said Natalie.

Mary Ellis looked almost enviously at her.

Why was it, she asked herself, that all the rich wine of life should be held to the lips of one who scarcely cared to taste it?

"But it will be such fun," said she, wistfully.

"I'm not at all certain of that," said Natalie.

"Hugo Worthington will be there."

"Oh of course, Hugo Worthington is just like a boy let out of school. He goes everywhere."

"And Captain Westray."

A deeper tint came into Natalie's cheeks at the mention of this name.

"Will he be there?"

"Mrs. Turner told me that he had accepted," answered Mary.

"Then perhaps I [illegible] go," said Miss Warwick.

Mary Ellis went upstairs to her own room—the two girls were staying at a fashionable summer hotel, upon the edge of the cliffs, where the billows of life and fashion rolled with the dawn of every summer, and looked at herself in the little fern-wreathed mirror over the mantle.

Natalie Warwick and Mary Ellis were distant cousins, but their fates in life seemed far differently marked out.

Natalie was the only child of a wealthy merchant, with scarcely an ungratified wish in the world, while Mary, the niece of a surly old wholesale grocer, who had adopted her because he couldn't very well help it, was kept on scanty commons of [illegible]

[illegible]

Which, as it be imagined, was pleasant tidings for poor Mary.

"I know I am not very pretty," said she, a little mournfully, as she surveyed her reflection in the glass.

"I have not got Natalie Warwick's glo[illegible] and satin-smooth skin; but then, [illegible] not positively ugly. Oh! I think [illegible]

[illegible] ravine near by.

[illegible] the sea a precipice extended almost sheer down to the water, fringed with trees, and forming a deliciously cool table land, where the impromptu banquet was [illegible].

Natalie Warwick was in her element.

She felt herself to be thoroughly mistress of the occasion—queen of the feast.

Hugo Worthington hung on her words like the humblest slave, and Basil Westray, stately and dignified though he was, haunted her foot-steps, a perfect shadow.

Mr. Leefield, a blonde-mustached London exquisite, was content with the honor [illegible] carrying her fan and parasol.

[illegible] Rimstone was [illegible]

As they sat picturesquely grouped around the edge of the cliff, Mary Ellis dropped her parasol.

It eddied a little way down the cliff, and then caught in a bush which grew at right angles with the precipice.

Hugo Worthington was just in time to catch it.

"You nearly lost your sunshade, Miss Ellis," said he, lightly. "If it had gone down the cliff, no one could have recovered it."

Mary colored, smiled, and thanked him.

Natalie leaned a little forward to look down the steep descent.

"There is a path," said she.

"But one only to be trod by goats alone," returned Westray.

[illegible] said Natalie, l[illegible].

"A true lover might do it," said Professor [illegible] he was under thirty. "I couldn't."

"And I would not," said Captain Westray as he stood a little in the background with [illegible]

[illegible] had tormented him all day [illegible] had played with [illegible], she had [illegible]

"[illegible]" said Natalie, looking up with a mischievous play of jetty light under her long eyelashes. "Do you remember the story of King Francis and the glove?"

"No, I don't," said Captain Westray. "It seems to me, though, there was something in it about some brilliant court lady flinging a glove into the lion's den to test her lover's devotion."

"And he sprang after it, didn't he?" said N[illegible]

"I would scorn to have a cavalier less chivalrous," said Natalie, with a languid softness—and as she spoke her lace-edged [illegible] fluttered down the precipice. [illegible]

No one present fancied the idea of reclaiming the scented trifle at the cost of life or limb—but presently Basil Westray swung himself over the cliff.

"Oh, don't let [illegible] Natalie's arm. "Call him back! Why don't you call him back?"

"Don't be a goose, Mary Ellis," said Natalie, with a little scornful laugh. "It won't hurt him."

"Remember his widowed mother," sobbed Mary. "Oh, Natalie, if his foot should slip, if he should be killed—his death will be at your door."

Natalie paled a little at this, but she made no reply.

A minute or two afterwards young Westray sprang up the grassy ascent beyond, white as death, but holding the pocket handkerchief in his hand.

"Here is your handkerchief, Miss Warwick," said he. "But a hundred thousand pounds would not tempt me to do that again."

And he walked away.

"I—I'm very much obliged to you," said Natalie faintly. "Captain Wes[illegible]"

But Ca[illegible] had turned away.

"[illegible] with me?" said N[illegible] in her [illegible] most appealing [illegible]

"[illegible]" slowly repeated Basil Westray. "[illegible] what you would call [illegible]. But, Miss Warwick, I never again [illegible] lady who would deliberately ris[illegible] of a fellow creature for the [illegible] that ever came [illegible] a week and [illegible]ed. Do you remember how the [illegible] of King Francis and the glove ended?"

> "He threw the glove, but not with love,
> Right in the lady's face!"

"Good-bye, Miss Warwick."

"You are not going!" exclaimed poor Na[illegible].

His only reply was to stride away down the glen.

Half way to the bottom of the hill, he saw Mary Ellis sitting all by herself weep[illegible]

"Oh, Captain Westray, it was so cruel of her!"

"Don't cry, Mary," he said, soothingly. "I am all safe and sound, you see. Besides, a man who would do such an idiotic act as that is not worthy any woman's tears. You don't really care so much about me as all that."

And then, as she lifted her wet eyes to his face, he added quickly—

"Little Mary do you love me?"

[illegible] heart caught in the rebound.

[illegible]ly disenchanted with the royal Na[illegible] Mary's gentler attractions were [illegible] to endear her to him.

And [illegible] they entered the hotel that [illegible] they were engaged.

Natalie Warwick cried herself to sleep that night.

She had really cared for Captain Westray more than for any other man she had ever known—and she had lost him for ever.

"I wish I had kept out of that odious picnic," she sobbed [illegible]

Mary Ellis was married a few weeks subsequently, but Miss Warwick wouldn't come to the wedding.

Nor did anyone very much care.

◆

HOW TO FORECAST WEATHER.—1. When the temperature falls suddenly there is a storm forming south of you.

2. When the temperature rises suddenly there is a storm forming north of you.

3. The wind always blows from a region of fair weather toward a region where a storm is forming.

4. Cirrus clouds always move from a region where a storm is in progress to a region of fair weather.

5. Cumulus clouds always move from a region of fair weather to where a storm is [illegible]

6. When cirrus clouds are moving rapidly from the north or northeast there will be rain inside of twenty-four hours, no matter how cold it is.

7. When cirrus clouds are moving rapidly from the south or southeast, there will be a cold rainy storm on the morrow, if it be in summer, and if it be in winter there will be a snow-storm.

8. The wind always blows in a circle round a storm, and when it blows from the north, the heaviest rain is east of you; if it blows from the south, the heaviest rain is west of you.

◆

WHEN you visit or leave New York City save Baggage Expressage and Carr[illegible] Hire, and stop at the GRAND UNION HOTEL, opposite Grand Central [illegible]

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New Publications.

In the present day when so much that is unhealthy, if not absolutely dangerous in the way of reading for boys is published, it is more than a pleasure to skim over the breezy pages of "Man-of-War Life" written by Charles Nordhoff. It is a reproduction of the first edition published in 1854, with the addition of numerous fine pictures to enhance its interest for the young. Books there are in plenty for boys both of sea and land, but comparatively few which are not more or less the work of fancy. This however is narrative of the author's actual experience, and therefore may be depend[illegible] [illegible] readers. Thus while it may fill the strong[illegible] [illegible] false ones to lead them astray. It is full of wonderful adventures, descriptions of places and things all over the world told in such a lively and fascinating way, that really it is not hard for one to imagine he is going round the globe in person with the writer. It is elegantly printed and bound [illegible] red backs. Dodd, Mead & [illegible] N. Y. For sale by Claxton & [illegible]

[illegible] of the Cid" is the story of the greatest of the heroes of old Spain and perhaps the greatest in the world's history or legend. It has all the interest of the Arabian Nights in the matter of reading, while furnishing in its facts, personages, references, incidents, and possibly to some extent fables, a key to all that literature of Spain, France and other countries which treats of the Romantic age. There is a world of poetry, of story, and of history, [illegible] cannot well be understood, unless [illegible] reader be familiar with this Chronicle. [illegible] more particularly as a holiday [illegible] that the present edition is issued. And disregarding any views of its [illegible] furthermore than as contributing to present pleasure, it is highly commendable. From first page to last it teems with battles, challenges, brave knights and fair ladies, war horses, lances, sword, armor and shield, with all the rest of the soldierly paraphernalia that is never without interest to the eye and heart of boyhood. We can re[illegible] and good reading, while its pictures, printing binding etc., is of the most beautiful and best. Dodd, Mead & Co. New York, Publishers. For sale by Claxton & Co. Price $3.00.

Oliver Wendell Holmes poem of "Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle," has been issued in the grandest possible style by Dodd, Mead & Co. New York, as a holiday book. It embraces thirty-two pages, large octave size, and each page contains a magnificent full-page picture in colors illustrative of var[illegible] well-known artist H. W. Mc[illegible] for its character and price we [illegible] no book equal to it before the public. The poem gives plenty of opportunity for the artist and he has certainly made the best of his chances. A brighter-looking, prettier holiday book, or present to one of artistic tastes could scarcely be desired. The binding and other details are in [illegible] keeping with the splendidly drawn and colored pictures. For sale by Porter & Coates. Price $2.00.

[illegible]

"Vicks Illustrated Floral Guide" for November is full of matter that all flower lovers will be interested in. There is no better flower magazine published. James Vick Rochester, N. Y. $1.25 per year.

The December number of *Arthur's* is one of the best we have yet seen. Besides its stories, poetry, etc; it contains in the departments a large number of timely hints on the making of Christmas presents, etc. Published 920 Walnut St. Phila.

The English Illustrated Magazine has the following contents for November. Most of the articles are very finely illustrated; In the Fens; The Banqueting House; and Old Whitehall; Brass Work at Birmingham; The Little Schoolmaster Mark; Oysters and the Oyster Question; The continuation of the serial story "The Armorer's Apprentice." Etc., etc. Macmillan & Co. London and New York, Publishers. Price 15 cents.

[illegible]

Russell & Co. 59 Bloomfield and 126 Tre[illegible] [illegible] publications [illegible] issues of their famous [illegible] Library for mixed, male, and female [illegible] I am the Rose Red; Noon; Only [illegible]; Evening; and Prayer. Other new songs are "Ole Nicker Demus," by Sam Lucas; "Tiddy Fol Lol," and "Who'd Have Thought It," as sung by N. C. Goodwin.

◆

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Our Young Folks.

THE MAGIC VASE.

BY PIPKIN.

"WO-HO! Steady Jenny!"

It was the voice of Peter Wiggins, best and most contented of ploughboys.

He was ploughing on a breezy hill-side of the South Downs, and managed his two horses for himself.

"A very pretty furrow," he added, speaking to himself, as he looked back along the line which his ploughshare had drawn.

And then with a contented grunt he was turning to his work again when something caught his eye which at once arrested his attention—some fluttering scarlet thing down among the brown clods. What could it be?

Well, the best way was for Peter to go and see; so he did.

It turned out to be something so very remarkable that Peter knew not what to make of it.

A little man in a scarlet cap and cloak, a creature not more than five or six inches in height, and yet with every feature perfect, and an expression which at that particular moment wore an amused and rather sarcastic expression.

"Well!" said the little man very sharply, "do you think you'll know me again if you see me?"

Peter did not answer, but grinned from ear to ear.

"You are a lout, Peter," shouted the mannikin; "do you hear? you are a lout, I say; you have no more brains than an owl, nor so much."

"Well, since you are so mighty clever, what can you tell me that I don't know?" asked Peter rather contemptuously.

"Ho! ho!" shouted the little red man in derision; "a great deal, my good Peter—I may say, heaps. You miss all your best opportunities—most mortals do—ploughboys in particular.

"Why, have you not missed the Magic Vase? It is buried right against the old stump, and I declare if your coulter has not run within half an inch of it, and you never saw it.

"If you want to be a rich man, you had better secure that vase, for it has magic properties. Fill it with yellow blossoms—gorse or dandelions or coltsfoot or broom—and repeat the charm which is written round the edge, and the blossoms will all turn to sovereigns.

"But mark this! not one word must you whisper to mortal man of this possession, or it will bring ruin on you and yours."

So saying the little man disappeared into the earth as though he had been a stoat or a mole, and left Peter transfixed with astonishment.

For about ten minutes Peter stood with mouth and eyes wide open, after which he recovered his senses and made across the clods to the spot which the mannikin had pointed out.

In another minute the pot was unearthed, and there, sure enough, was the charm written round the rim in old characters—

"[illegible] of golden treasure,
Choose the better, choose the worse,
Pride's delight or Nature's pleasure,
Ease of heart, or wealth of purse."

Often and often had Granny Wiggins told Peter what a grand thing it would be to be rich.

But now that untold wealth was within his reach, all those sayings of his grandmother came back to mind, and he determined to drink to the full the cup which wealth could buy.

So he lost no time in collecting a lot of yellow blossoms and putting them into the Magic Vase.

And lo! when the charm was repeated, and the vase turned upside down, the yellow gold fell to the earth and lay there in a glittering pile.

"Aha!" laughed Peter gleefully, "I will go straight to Mother Crump's and buy up half the shopful."

So when the day's work was done, Peter trotted off to the general store with both his pockets full of sovereigns.

For half an hour or more he stood trying to make up his mind what he should buy.

At length, however, he fixed upon the following assortment—

Six oranges and twelve sticks of barley-sugar, a new whip-lash and two peg-tops, a blue cotton tie with white spots, like the one that Farmer Scroggins wore on Sundays, a leather strap, a ball of twine, two pocket-knives, a whistle, and a roll of wire, a set of fishing-lines and hooks, a pair of leather gaiters, and a fur cap, with flaps to cover his ears.

These were for himself.

Then for Granny he bought a red cloak, a pair of pattens, a new market basket, and a feather bed.

But he was not altogether happy.

People wondered where he got all the money, and much whispering went on.

Some of them avoided him as if he were a thief.

The next day Peter thought he would go to the town.

He strolled through the wonderful streets and stared [illegible] wonderful shops, feeling [illegible] he came [illegible] wealth.

His new smock frock and gaiters and his fur cap would have been thought superb in Little Pelverton, but they did not seem so to strike the townspeople.

On the contrary, they appeared somewhat curious and comic.

Once, when Peter was gazing at some gold and silver ornaments displayed in a shop window, he became uneasily conscious that remarks were being made behind his back.

"Do you see the young bumpkin?" whispered one voice; "just look at his gaiters!"

"Yes, and his smock too," whispered the other, "the sort of things the Antediluvians wore.

"Reminds one of the little people in my young sister's Noah's Ark, doesn't it?" the other laughed.

They were only two empty-headed and ill-mannered fops, and Peter need not have minded them had he but remembered that a boy's worth is in his mind and heart, and not in the coat upon his back. But Peter's feelings were hurt.

"All right," said he to himself, as he walked away with his cheeks quite hot and red, "but I'll be as fine as any of you."

So off marched Peter to the tailor's, and such a waistcoat did he buy! flowered silk with mighty blue blossoms all over it, and a necktie of brilliant scarlet.

Then at the hatter's he got the tallest of hats, which he stuck on the back of his head like an old woman's bonnet, and so with a stiff collar grazing his chin, and a walking stick much too tall for him, he paraded the town, feeling that now he was a gentleman indeed.

Such a figure did Peter cut!

The policeman laughed till the buttons flew off his coat, the coachman got off his box to see him, and the nursemaid laughed till she cried, and ran the perambulator right into an old bachelor's calves.

Wherever Peter went the town was in a roar of laughter.

The baker shook with merriment to such a degree that the tray fell off his head, and spilt all the pies on the pavement, and one old lady who was rather stout laughed so violently that she got quite ill, and next day she was obliged to have the doctor.

Strange to say, however, Peter did not seem to know what every one was laughing at; but when he found that he himself was the object of derision he slunk back to his inn by some by-streets, wishing that he had never been born.

To add to his misery it began to pour in torrents, and Peter got so wet that his grand clothes were ruined, and he himself was obliged to lie abed while his garments were dried.

Patter! patter! patter! came the raindrops against the window-pane, while the clouds grew thicker every moment, till the room was quite dark and low rumblings were heard in the distance.

Suddenly a flash of lightning gleamed into the room, and what should Peter see but Mannikin Red seated on the rail of the bedstead at his feet, and laughing as if he would do himself an injury.

"Ho! ho! ho! Peter Wiggins; how do you like being rich? Ha! ha! ha! what a fine waistcoat you bought! All spoilt with the rain, Peter!"

Peter started up in bed, and seized the pillow to fling at the little monster.

But just then the clouds broke, and the daylight came again; and Mannikin Red was nowhere to be seen.

The next day came a traveler to the inn.

He had come from the north country, and had wonderful tales to tell of sights which he had seen on the way.

Among other things he narrated how he had visited Goldenbury Castle, a wonderful ruin not five-and-twenty miles from the doors of the "Green man," within whose walls, as he assured the listeners, all the country people believed that gold was buried; and did not the very name declare the truth of the tradition?

Upon this, Peter pondered, and the more he pondered the more he felt that here at last was a way to wealth, independent of Mannikin Red.

It was just what he wanted; for if only he could get money and not be obliged to keep secret how he got it, he would be able to live as a rich man in Little Pelverton without being an object of suspicion.

Twenty-five miles were nothing to a hearty ploughboy, but it was noon before he started, and when he arrived, with his spade upon his shoulder, it was already dusk.

Goldenbury was a lovely ruin, and if Peter had known where the true wealth of it lay he would have let his eyes rest on the golden wall-flowers, and the glossy ivy trailing upon its hoary stones, rather than on the black earth.

But all his thoughts were of buried gold; so to work he went while the wall-flowers nodded their heads at him in laughter, and the rooks chatted together in the tree-tops in wonder at his folly.

Thud! thud! thud! went Peter's spade but never a gleam of gold saw he.

"Never mind," said he, "presently I shall come to a great chest, or perhaps a chamber full of gold."

So on he dug.

At length it grew dark, and still Peter dug, and had not found a single groat.

At length when he could see no longer he threw down the spade.

No good! night coming on, and not a house or even a cottage in sight!

Well, a shelter of some sort must be found.

So Peter started back, hoping to find at any rate, some barn where he might rest.

For an hour or more Peter wandered, and still there was the sky above and the open heath beneath, but not a sign of shelter.

He had plainly missed the track.

Then, when he was getting quite weary and spiritless, he saw a flickering light.

"A cottage!" he exclaimed, and set off to it.

It was a pale, blue, ghostly light, quite unlike the ruddy glow of a hearth, or the steady flame of a lamp.

As he drew nearer, Peter found the light shifting from place to place, at times almost going out and then suddenly burning up again.

He was just speculating as to the meaning of all this, when——flop! flounder! ugh! a splutter, a struggle, and a mouthful of mud!

"It must have been Will-o'-the-Wisp," thought Peter as he scrambled out of the bog; but just then the moon came out, and showed the real author of the mischief not a dozen yards away.

It was Mannikin Red with a lantern in his hand.

"Ha! ha! ho! ho! How are you enjoying yourself, Peter?" mocked the wicked little elf.

"What a pickle you are in, to be sure! You thought you would get gold elsewhere, and rid yourself of me, did you? Get gold without the worry of it, eh? Ha! ha!"

Peter was beside himself with anger, and suddenly, not thinking what he was doing, he plucked the vase from his breast and flung it with all his might at the mannikin.

The mannikin vanished with a peal of laughter, but the Magic Vase went rolling and rolling along the turf in a most marvellous way.

Peter chased it, but all to no purpose.

However fast Peter ran, the vase rolled faster, and for all I know it is rolling to this day, for it is certain that no one ever saw it again.

That night Peter slept in a shepherd's hut, and next day he went back to Little Pelverton, and knocked at his grandmother's door.

"Ah, Granny," he said as he entered, "you are quite wrong; money cannot of itself bring happiness; you must know how to use it wisely. For my part I really and truly believe that the way to be really happy is to have plenty of fresh air and hard work."

* * *

RATHER STRANGE.

BY HENRY FRITH.

"DEAD men tell no tales. Humph! I know better. Never believe such an absurd assertion, madam."

It was a tall, thin gentleman, with a gloomy countenance, and a hat of the sombrero style, who made this remark to me, and he came upon me in the wood path, very much as though he had been a ghost.

Of course, it was not consistent with the laws of etiquette that he should speak, or that I should answer him, but I scarcely think that if Mrs. Grundy herself should encounter in the woods, between post-office and farmhouse, a gentleman with such wild eyes, and such a curious way of rolling them about, that she would think of anything but mollifying him.

Certainly I did not.

I at once agreed with the stranger, and walked rather faster than before.

"I trust you are not afraid of me, madam," said the stranger, noticing this latter fact.

"I sincerely hope that my abrupt address has not alarm you. I have been so long exiled from society that I scarcely know how to address its fair ornaments. I have no card; no matter. You're not alarmed, madam?"

I said I was not.

"As I saw you pass the spot where I lay under the trees, madam, it struck me that you were exactly the person I desired to confide in.

"I consequently hastened after you. Perhaps, too, I may have desired to warn you that if you desire to be rid of a troublesome person, the very worst way is to kill him.

"Shut him up if you can; chain him in some black dungeon; but don't kill him. If you do, you never can get rid of him again—never, I assure you; never. You can lock and bar a living person out, but dead ones come to you in your most private rooms, and stand at you bedside when you wake in the night, sit at your table, follow you wherever you go."

Here he looked over his shoulder, and I involuntarily looked over mine.

"If you're jealous of any one, madam, don't kill her, no, no, no! it's very foolish."

"Nothing," I instantly agreed with him, "could be more foolish than to kill any-one."

And I was glad to know he held to his belief and hoped he would continue to hold it until I reached the farmhouse of the Simpkinses.

"I am glad that we agree so well," said the stranger.

"Madam, excuse my want of courtesy. Shall I offer you my arm over this rough pathway?"

I replied in a voice that sounded in my own ears like the bleating of a very meek young lamb, that, if he pleased, he must excuse me. I was obliged to hold up my dress.

He instantly assured me that my word was his law.

"Before I made my grand mistake, I was known as Polite Patterson in the very elegant circles in which I moved," he added; "but since then I've become a recluse. It was a grand mistake.

"Yes, yes; I never should have killed him, never."

I involuntarily gave a small shriek.

"You realize at once how foolish it was," said the tall gentleman, twisting his sombrero, and lifting his eyebrows higher than I ever saw any man lift them before; "but, yes—I killed him.

"I was very fond of her. Her name was Pamela Peyton, a beauty, a belle, an heiress—that, however, was nothing to me. I loved her for herself; and she smiled upon me until he come; and he was younger, handsomer, better than I. Ah! yes, much better.

"Yes, yes, it was the mamma who forced her to send me away, I know, and who encouraged him.

"Pamela liked me, poor Pamela; but I was driven away like a dog; and I saw her walking with him, talking with him. Once, yes, once I saw him kiss her. At that moment something happened to my brain. I have never mentioned it to anyone, but I tell you now in confidence. I heard it snap.

"That is how I temporarily lost my judgment and killed him. Beg pardon. Did I step on your dress?"

I said—

"Oh! no, not at all," in a much meeker bleat than the previous one.

"It was said of me in those old days, before my grand mistake, that I never tread on a lady's dress; but all is altered now," said the gentleman, resuming his sombrero, which he had snatched off as he bowed his apologies.

"Yes, yes. In my native town there is a long street well shaded with trees, which is known as Long Road.

"One evening, just in the gloaming, I saw him walking along it. I walked a little behind him.

"He took his hat off that the breeze might cool his head, I suppose. Oh, what beautiful curls he had. How well he walked.

"On his little finger was a ring—a diamond.

"I knew he had bought it for her. I carried in those days a knife. The knife I plunged into his back, and completed my mistake.

"He lay on his face there, in the moonlight, and I heard him moan once or twice, and then gasp for breath.

"After a while he was still. Then I stooped and touched him. How cold he was!

"On the little finger of the hand, that had clutched a turf of soft, spring grass in his dying agonies her ring glittered. It looked up at me in the moonlight, like a demon's eye.

"I rushed away and left him lying there.

"No one would ever know that I had killed him.

"Where do you think I went, madam? Straight to Pamela's house.

"I had not been there for two months, but I strode straight past the servant and into the passage.

"The window was open. There were no lights in the room, but the moon fell across the floor, whiter and brighter than I had ever seen it before.

"Near the window sat Pamela; but before I could speak, I saw that we were not alone.

"Someone had entered at the door with me, and passed before me now, and sat down beside her.

"It was the man I had just left lying dead in Long Road.

I saw him take the ring off and put it on her finger, and as he turned to do so, I saw the knife I had stabbed him with sticking out of his back, and saw that he was as white and stiff as dead men are. I don't know any more about it. I don't know what I said.

"There was a trial in court, and a prison, and I saw him lying in a coffin, and five minutes after sitting on a chair beside me. I've seen him ever since, just when I did not want to see him.

"For instance, now. There he comes. Excuse me for leaving you.

"I used to be called Polite Patterson in my youth. I know I should escort you to your door; but I can't introduce a dead man with a knife sticking out of his back to you—to any lady. Adieu."

To my great relief he snatched off his sombrero, made a low bow, and dashed away into the woods again; while I ran the other way as I never ran before in all my life.

In five minutes I met little Tommy Simpkins driving home the cows, and in five minutes more, was safe within the farmhouse, where I narrated my adventure.

"I want to know," said Mrs. Simpkins. "I wonder you're alive. Why, that's the loony gentleman that lives in the hollow. He must have got away from the man that watches him. I believe he did kill a man who cut him out with his girl twenty years ago, and he would have been hung, only they found out that he was crazy. He was in an asylum a long while, but his folks are rich, and they have him kept here now. I believe he's not dangerous, but he's rather strange."

At the time, I considered this a mild description of Mr. Patterson, and thanked Heaven that I had escaped violence at the hands of my strange companion.

* * *

He talked as if he had a "frog in his throat," but he was only hoarse; a single bottle of Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup relieved the trouble at once. 25 cents.

COULD WE BUT KNOW.

BY E. C. STEDMAN.

Could we but know
The land that ends our dark, uncertain travel,
Where lie those happier hills and meadows low—
Ah! if beyond the spirit's inmost cavil
Aught of that country could we surely know—
Who would not go?

Might we but hear
The hovering angels' high imagined chorus,
Or catch, betimes, with wakeful eyes and clear,
One radiant vista of the realm before us,
With one rapt moment given to see and hear,
Ah! who would fear?

Were we quite sure
To find the peerless friend who left us lonely,
Or there, by some celestial stream as pure,
To gaze in eyes that here were love-lit only—
This weary mortal coil, were we quite sure,
Who would endure?

ACTING IN EARNEST.

MANY actors are very real in their playing. One of them, Salvini, is so moved by the associations of his part that from the moment he steps on the stage he is no longer Salvini, but Othello, Lear, or any other of Shakspeare's masterpieces. It is jocularly said in Italy, that Salvini always carries in his pocket a free pardon, signed by Victor Emmanuel, and countersigned by the Minister of Justice, in case when he plays Othello, of his smothering Desdemona in downright earnest.

Another impassioned actor of the very highest class was the late Mr. Macready. "I have often watched him," wrote Mr. George Augustus Sala, "from the flies before he went on, standing at the wing, apparently lashing himself into the proper frame of excitement needed for the particular part which he was playing, and muttering meanwhile in a seemingly incoherent manner to himself. But I have been assured that these utterances were by no means incoherent, and that thoroughly identifying himself with the part, he unfeignedly believed himself, for the nonce, Hamlet, Macbeth, or what not; and would hold the most passionate discourse with himself, touching the guilt of Claudius, the gray hairs of Duncan, and the potency, gravity, and reverence of the Signory of Venice, his very noble and approved good masters."

On one occasion, immediately after the curtain had been rung up on the first part of Macbeth, an unlucky actor in the company chanced to stumble upon the tragedian during his passionate preparations, the consequence of which was that Macready, quite unwittingly, dealt him a blow on the hand with such force that the blood flowed forth; and as at that instant the victim was to make his entrance on the scene, he impersonated the "bleeding soldier" only too naturally, and much to the astonishment of the other actors.

According to Plutarch, Æsop, the Roman actor, so interested himself in the characters he undertook, that one day when he played Atreus, he, in that scene where it falls to his lot to consider how he might best destroy the tyrant Thyestes, worked himself into such an ungovernable rage that he struck one of the minor performers with his sceptre and laid him dead at his feet.

Garrick possessed strong powers of realization. A grocer in Lichfield, England—Garrick's native place—on the occasion of a brief visit to London, was desired by his neighbor, Peter Garrick, to wait upon his brother at Drury Lane Theatre on his behalf; for which purpose he furnished him with a letter of introduction.

In due time he arrived; yet, before presenting himself at the stage-door, the grocer thought he would first see the performance, as he wished to satisfy himself at the outset as to the personal appearance of David Garrick.

The theatre was crowded in every part; and when the idol of the public came on the stage as Abel Drugger, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. The consequence of this visit was, however, that the grocer returned to Lichfield without having presented his letter. He thus explained the cause to Peter:

"Your brother may be rich, as I daresay the man who lives like him must be; but, though he be your brother, he is one of the shabbiest, meanest, and most pitiful hounds that I ever saw in the whole course of my life!"

Edmund Kean was wont to portray his characters with terrible force. It has been stated that when whetting the knife in the Merchant of Venice, the great tragedian was so terribly in earnest, that Young, who played Antonio, used to tremble for his very life.

A parallel story to this, in which a fellow-actor found grave reason to tremble, indeed, is related of George Frederick Cooke. One night, Cooke, after having during the day quarreled with one of the company, was observed to be intently sharpening the edge of his sword in the greenroom. This was a few minutes before going on the stage as Hamlet; and, being questioned, he said:

"Yes, I and Mr. Laertes will settle our little dispute to-night."

As he was popularly known to be rancorous and violent on such occasions, this news startled his intended victim; yet, as no possible excuse could prevent him from going on the scene and engaging Hamlet in the proper order of the play, he stood so far on the defensive, that flinging himself upon his adversary, he bore him to the stage and swore he would never let him up until he promised to do him no mischief. This new reading of Shakspeare's text was a good deal of a surprise to the audience.

Grains of Gold.

That trial is not fair where affection is judge.

What we call learning is but the knowledge of our predecessors.

No man is so insignificant as to be sure his example can do no hurt.

Great hearts alone understand how much glory there is in being good.

Kindness—the honey of life which dulls the sharp taste of the bitter.

A man without ambition is like dough without leaven to make it rise.

A noble part of every true life is to learn to undo what has been wrongly done.

Cheerful looks make every dish a feast; and 'tis that which crowns a welcome.

False happiness loves to be in a crowd or to draw the eyes of the world upon her.

Do all the good you can in the world, and make as little noise about it as possible.

Let every man do the best he knows, and if he is not a fool, he will do about right.

Holiness is the architectural plan upon which God buildeth up his living temples.

Those who can't see a mistake before they commit, are not likely to profit by it afterward.

A generous mind does not feel as belonging to itself alone, but to the whole human race.

To despond at difficulties discovers want of stability; to despair at danger shows want of courage.

Work every hour, paid or unpaid; see only that you work, and you cannot escape your reward.

There are two conditions necessary to all effective sympathy—a kind heart and delicate perceptions.

Divine love is a secret flower, which in its early bud is happiness, and in its full bloom is heaven.

Look not mournfully into the past; it cannot come back again; wisely improve the present—it is thine.

Boast not of you health and strength too much; but whilst you enjoy them, praise God and use them.

Resolve to see the world on its sunny side, and you have almost won the battle of life at the outset.

Our adversaries think they refute us when they reiterate their own opinions without paying attention to ours.

Any one may do a casual act of good nature, but a continuation of them shows it is a part of the temperament.

The true way to advance another's virtue is to follow it, and the best way to cry down another's vice is to decline it.

Home is something thought flat and dull, and to often made so, just for the want of recognizing what it stands for.

When a misfortune happens to a friend, look forward and endeavor to prevent the same thing from happening to yourself.

Selfishness is the one great foe to a happy home. If one could overthrow this, all else would fall into order and harmony.

Happy is he who appropriates the acquisitions of others, whether their virtues for example, or their follies for avoidance.

Mistakes may serve for guides as well as successes; and we can learn about as much from seeing what not to do as what to do.

It is often more necessary to conceal contempt than resentment, the former being never forgotten, but the latter sometimes.

No man will so speedily and violently resent a supposed wrong as he who is accustomed to inflict injuries upon his associates.

Every man has three relations to acquit himself in: His body helps to make one, the Deity another, and his neighbors a third.

Under the laws of Providence, life is a probation; probation is almost a succession of trials, temptations are emergencies; and for emergencies we need the preparation and the safeguard of prayer.

Femininities.

Some of the canes made for ladies have a place made in the candle to carry their chewing-gum.

A Western schoolmistress is a skilled shot, and goes hunting nearly every morning before school.

A Baltimore judge has decided that the Maryland law cannot restrain a woman from talking as much as she pleases.

Oswald Reiman, in a jest, told Mary Nind, his sweetheart, she was not the girl for him, and she committed suicide.

A Virginia girl goes to school all day and makes enough money to buy her clothes by giving music lessons in the evening.

"I have a great love for old hymns," said a pretty girl to a male friend. "I am much fonder of the young hers," he replied.

When I see a child, I always feel safe with these women folk; for I have always found that the road to a woman's heart is through her child.

"It is a curious fact," says an etymologist, "that it is the female mosquito which torments man." A bachelor thinks that it is not at all curious.

A woman wants a divorce on the ground of "extreme cruelty." She alleges that her husband pilfered her face-powder to polish up his brass watch-chain.

A man has just found his sister from whom he had been separated fifty years. She was the cook in his boarding-house, and he recognized her style of hash.

The female heart is just like a new India-rubber shoe: you may pull and pull at it, till it stretches out a yard long, and then let go, and it will fly right back to its old shape.

A mother, not long since, was lamenting the loss of a child (one of a family of eight), "because," she said, "there was just enough for a cotillion, and they did dance so prettily!"

Fashionable ladies are fast discarding the picket-fence style of penmanship. They've got tired of writing their husbands to bring them a new dress, and have a washtub brought home instead.

An inveterate bachelor being asked by a sentimental Miss why he did not secure some fond one's company in the voyage of the ocean of life, replied: "I would if I were sure such an ocean would be Pacific."

"Are your domestic relations agreeable?" was the question put to an unhappy-looking specimen of humanity. "Oh, my domestic relations are all right," he said; "it is my wife's relations that are causing the trouble."

Any man that understands horses, has a pretty fair knowledge of women, for they are just alike in temper, and require the identical same treatment. Encourage the timid ones, and be gentle and steady with the fractious.

A horse balked with a New Hampshire woman the other day, and she quietly took out her knitting and sat there for nine hours, when the animal concluded he'd better be going along. It was his first experience with a woman.

Two ladies were coming out of the theatre. Seeing the other drop her programme, one of them exclaimed, "Why, Mrs. Blank, do you always throw your programme away? I should think you would like to keep it for a momentum."

"May I have the honor to conduct your daughter to the supper-table?" asked a society gentleman of a lady from the country. "May you take her to supper? Why, of course; and you can take me, too. That's what we came here for."

A woman who is kissed by mistake in the dark, always screams and makes a great row about it, but you can wager she is provoked in another way when the man commences to offer excuses, and says he wouldn't have done it if he had known whom it was.

One of the "smart" youths of Livermore, Me., put a snake in a box of shavings belonging to a thirteen-year-old-girl named Lizzie Stevens. The reptile so frightened the girl that she went into convulsions and died amidst the most terrible agony.

At a fancy ball at Sydney, New South Wales, Mrs. J. M. Sweet, wife of the editor of the Morning Herald, appeared as "The Press," in several pages of the paper named, printed in colors on a beautiful white satin. Every column was in a different color.

Mrs. Margaret Barker, of Elgin, Ill., felt so grieved over the death of her canary, that she assembled her friends, preached a discourse over the bird's remains, invoked a prayer for the rest of its soul, and had it placed in a small coffin and buried in a cemetery.

"I hev allus noticed," observes Aunt Tabitha, "that the boy who lets his mother bring in all the kindlin' wood and build the kitchen fire, is the mourner that bellers loudest at her funeral." And then she added thoughtfully, "Mebbe as not it is because he misses her the most."

A trade circular, under the title, "What Will the Coming Girl Wear?" contains a description of the articles likely to constitute the wardrobe of the future. It is a description sufficient to convince anybody that what the coming girl will chiefly wear is a good big hole in the pocketbook of the man who supports her.

"No; Lizzie, poor girl, is the only one in our set who has no musical accomplishments. She can't play simple exercises, to say nothing of 'The Mocking Bird' and 'The Maiden's Prayer,' which our teacher gave us at the second lesson." Lizzie was snapped up the next week by a rich bachelor who overheard the remark quoted, and her husband and neighbors wear happy countenances.

A girl should be taught to detest two things thoroughly—idleness and aimlessness. These two enemies have given birth to ennui, which is pain. If she be a child of fortune, instruct her, even more carefully than if she were poor, to work in some definite manner for pleasure's own sake. More than all, train her hands and stir her brain with the constant assurance that she will find her sweetest satisfaction in that which she is to accomplish in life.

News Notes.

Cyclones have destroyed $1,000 worth of property.

Eighty-nine counties in Georgia favor prohibition.

They have "soap bubble sociables" in Laramie, Wy. T.

Snow fully a foot deep covers the northern half of Maine.

Georgia papers are urging the use of the whipping-post in that State.

An oyster-shell kept in a kettle is said to keep the vessel free of rust.

A New England tooth-pick factory uses 40,000 cords of wood annually.

J. A. Harris, of Florida, gets $63,000 net out of his orange crop this season.

There are two cats at the Crystal Palace Exhibit of London priced at $50,000.

The new two cent stamp costs the Government nine cents per thousand.

The American Bible Society will issue 2,000,000 Bibles and Testaments this year.

Jacksonville, Fla., being short of funds, has retrenched by reducing her police force.

One of the former mayors of Milwaukee, Wis., says he would not take the office again for $20,000.

The Hindoo baby hangs in a basket from the roof, and is taught to smoke long before it learns to walk.

The most expensive drug now in the market is ergotinin; it costs $[illegible] a grain, or nearly $1,500 a pound.

A children's opera bouffe has been the attraction at Mercedes, Spain. The prima donna was five years of age.

A flock of blackbirds estimated at a mile in length flew southward over Parsons, Kan., one morning last week.

A recent French law makes re-vaccination incumbent upon every student received into the lyceums and colleges.

Experiments in determining the height and velocity of clouds by means of photography are being made in England.

According to the decision of a Baltimore justice, a husband is liable, and can be sued for whatever slander his wife utters.

A wild pigeon flying at double the rate of an express train, can inspect the ground below, and discover its food with facility.

Danbury, Conn., had a carpenter who kept as much as $6,000 in his shop. That is the sum burglars found in his safe at least.

"Plenty of style, but no culture, is what they say of New York. "Plenty of culture, and no style," is what they say of Boston.

Roast elephant is a sacred dish in Tonquin and Annam, as are also bird's-nest pies, made of esculent swallows with a paste of insects.

Jonathan C. Bowles, who lately died as a pauper in the Cleveland Infirmary, was twice worth $100,000. He lost both fortunes by speculation.

The students in a female college in Milwaukee, Wis., are in rebellion because the authorities have forbidden the wearing of hoops and bangs.

Maine has 21,000 miles of wildernesses, and the whole State of Massachusetts could be set down in the middle of them and not be able to find its way out.

The story comes from North Carolina of a dog that climbs trees after opossums and coons. He doesn't stick his toe-nails in like a cat, but climbs like a boy.

A Grand Rapids court has awarded Mrs. L. H. Stevens another divorce from a man from whom she was once before divorced, but whom she re-married.

An Albany firm have utilized tin scraps. They make wrought plate dovetails for stove-legs, and utilize from six to eight tons of scraps every month for this purpose.

A saloon-keeper at St. Charles, Minn., advertises his business for sale, explaining that he wishes to get on the other side of the bar "and prepare for heaven."

Eighty thousand children in the north of England form the "Dickey Bird Society." They are pledged to protect birds, never to destroy a nest, and to feed birds in winter.

An Illinois woman has done no work since her recent conversion, and her husband has sued the revivalist who was instrumental in destroying her household usefulness.

A man in Kingston, Ont., who feared that the body of his wife would be stolen, erected a tent over her grave the day she was buried, seven weeks ago, and has slept there ever since.

A Mrs. Flannagan is under arrest at Liverpool upon the charge of murdering six persons, her husband among the number, all of whose lives she had insured for handsome amounts.

A Buffalo man, who owned a common yellow-bird which he petted very much, died recently, and the bird has since died from grief, having drooped steadily after its owner's death.

In Alaska everything freezes solid by the middle of October, and remains so until spring. June, July and August are the only months that are even as warm as our coldest winter days.

* * *

JUST AFTER CHRISTMAS of 1870 I was laid up with an obstinate Cold, together with a Spitting of Blood, accompanied with some fever—from the joint effects of which I was greatly weakened, and became rapidly reduced. Following the best advice I could get, I tried various medicines, but none apparently done much good, leaving me low-spirited enough. I made up my mind at last to try Dr. Jayne's Expectorant, and procured some. I used it carefully as directed, and gradually got rid of my complaint.—Wm. A. C. Pyle, Tamaron, Perry County, Wis.

OF DREAMS.

DREAMS of nuptials are considered to portend a funeral.

The extraction of a firm and sound tooth signifies the loss of a near and dear friend; but if the tooth should be decayed and painful, this dream promises deliverance from a secret and deadly enemy. If such firmly built things as a house or city appear to be shaken, it is an omen of exile or commotion in the State.

Two candles signify breaches of friendship and dissensions. Dreams of hares signify flight; of dogs quarrels; of sheep, wealth, unless they should be shorn or diseased; the crowing of a cock denotes victory, unless anyone should interrupt it, then it is an omen that the victory, which was on the eve of being obtained, will be lost.

The rising sun denotes increase of wealth and splendor; the setting sun the contrary. A dream of the full moon is one of very bad omen, for it signifies that immediate misfortunes and decrease of greatness will follow.

Dreams of the eclipse of the sun or moon perdict an intermission of prosperity, but that it will again return. Whoever dreams that his hair is pulled, it is a warning that something will happen by which his pride will have a fall.

The loss of a hat has at one time been interpreted as an omen of disgrace, at another as a protection from some injury; but the loss of a cloak, &c., is a sure sign that poverty will succeed to wealth. To dream that the pillow is dragged from our bed signifies that something will happen by which our rest will be disturbed.

Whoever dreams that he is smoking tobacco has a warning that he will turn his wealth into smoke.

The best-omened dreams are those in which the dreamer fancies himself carried gently through the air, for they foretell increase of dignity or a happy death. To dream that handsome shoes are presented by a friend is a warning of timely flight; but if anyone in his sleep searches for boots or shoes without finding them, it foretells that when in great danger he will be prevented from escaping.

Whoever dreams that someone puts a clown's cloak on him, or covers his face with flour, a mask, &c., must be cautious lest a more cunning man than himself should deceive him, and then laugh at his simplicity. A dream in which a person seems to follow a cross in some public procession is a sign that he will be persecuted on account of his religion.

If any one dreams of violent knocking at his doors, or that his ear is pulled, it is a warning of approaching death. If a man dreams that he is dead it is not an omen of his death, because whoever dreams that he is dead also dreams that he sees or speaks after his death; but a dream that our curtains are drawn aside by a man lately dead is an intimation of the death of some near relation.

A man having dreamt that an egg was buried beneath his bed, went to consult a conjurer, who told him there was a treasure concealed under his bed. The man dug and discovered a quantity of silver, in the middle of which there was gold. He ran in ecstacies to the conjuror, offering some pieces of silver as a reward; upon which the conjurer said, "Do you give me none of the yolk of the egg?" meaning that he expected some of the gold also. This dream is related by Cicero, also by Valerius Maximus.

* * *

TURNIPS.—In storing turnips and other roots for winter if it is desired to keep them fresh and crisp till spring it is best to place them in pits in a dry part of the garden. If wanted during the winter they may be kept fresh in a common cellar by packing in a bin in alternate layers in sand which will exclude the air and retain sufficient moisture to keep them crisp.

* * *

A "Fair" Shot.—A miss.

* * *

ASHBURNHAM, MASS., Jan. 14, 1880.

I have been very sick over two years. They all gave me up as past cure. I tried the most skillful physicians, but they did not reach the worst part. The lungs and heart would fill up every night and distress me, and my throat was very bad. I told my children I never should die in peace until I had tried Hop Bitters. I have taken two bottles. They have helped me very much indeed. I am now well. There was a lot of sick folks here who have seen how they helped me, and they used them and are cured, and feel as thankful as I do that there is so valuable a medicine made.

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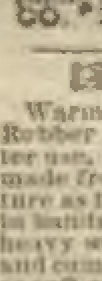

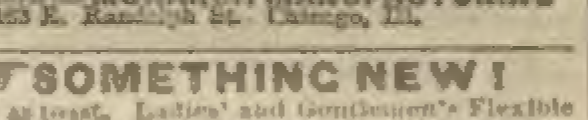

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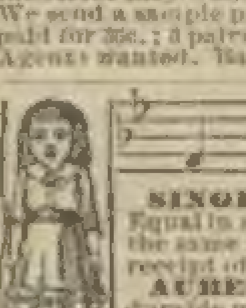

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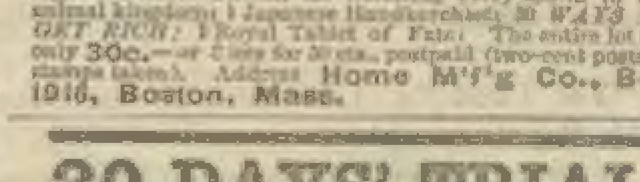

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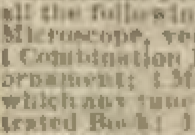

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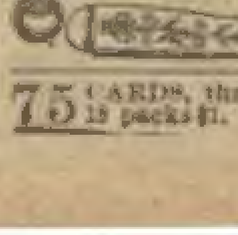

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Facetiæ.

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Motto for croquet—"She Stoops to Conquer."

Following suit—A dandy following the fashion.

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The Mississippi River is very low, and cannot leave its bed.

Matches are low, but it seems a pity to strike them when they are down.

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10 Beautiful 7 stop Cabinet Organs $100 each	1,000	500 Ladies' and Gents' Pocket Knives	[illegible]
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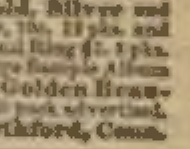

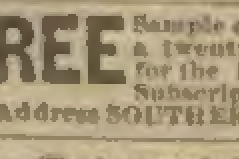

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50 New Enameled Chromo Cards for 1884, name on, 10c. Prize with 3 p'ks. Potter & Co, Montowese, Ct

Ladies' Department.

FASHION CHAT.

IT has recently been rumored here and there that colored hosiery was going out of fashion, and that black stockings and white ones—old-time white ones—were taking their place.

It would be difficult to say on what authority these rumors are started. In Paris, as well as everywhere else where fashion is not a totally dead letter—an unknown quantity—white stockings have long since been banished, and not the faintest indication of their resuscitation is to be perceived.

As to black stockings, they are, of course, worn a great deal, but the fashion is more English than French. In Paris the "correct thing" is a cotton, lisle thread or raw silk stocking of dark tint, plain or in stripes of various kinds. This is for the daytime.

With evening dress, stockings are in pale tints that match the toilet, always of silk or the finest lisle thread, and embroidered or open-worked on the instep and leg, this fancy hosiery being shown off to advantage by the little slipper, with its very short vamp and high heel, which is "de rigueur" under the circumstances.

People may wear white stockings if they choose, of course—they may wear anything; but they need not flatter themselves that they are in the fashion when they do it, that is all. Some of the vertical striped lisle thread stockings in black and raspberry red, black and yellow, black and pink, black and blue, or white and red and white and blue, or in checked patterns, in stripes of three colors—for instance, gold, red and Nile green—are very pretty with any sort of house dress and can be worn all winter indoors.

A prettily shod foot is so charming in a woman! A dainty slipper, a fine stocking so suggestive of feminine grace! Better, if the toilet budget is slender, sacrifice a little in the trimming of the dresses and the number of them, and allow one's self a generous margin for those small details and accessories — gloves, chaussure, lingerie, laces, which are so characteristically womanly and bespeak so plainly by their presence a natural refinement.

This is advice which cannot too often be urged on women. And, indeed, even conventional fashion is very propitious to such methods at present.

It is not necessary for a woman—if she be not launched in the very gayest whirl of society—to have very much in the way of dress at present. We mean, of course, in point of quantity.

Dresses, wraps, hats and bonnets are handsome nowadays; so handsome, generally, that they can be worn a great deal before they are faded-looking and before the wearer tires of them. Hence a wardrobe, as well stocked as the average, need not contain a great variety of clothes. There is absolutely no necessity for this. A handsome tailor-made cloth suit is sufficient for street wear for the entire winter. A rich-looking wrap of some sort, to wear with a handsome reception dress in the evening, and a substantial raglan or dark ulster, for bad weather, traveling, etc., come next.

A long dinner dress, one or two evening toilets and a pretty morning dress of the princesse or Mother Hubbard shape, also a dainty breakfast sacque, are added.

Last year's dresses can be revamped, made over, combined, to form useful costumes for indoor wear.

It is sheer folly to stock one's closets with clothes which one has no occasion to wear and which, after having hung a couple of years, are made over without having been put on half a dozen times.

If women of large means wish to pursue this course, it may be very well, though even then we should call it silly.

But it is the poorest policy for women whose income is only moderate, or small. To have a few dresses at a time, to have them handsome, and to wear them while they are fashionable, then part with them and get new—this is the best course in such cases.

And here a word as to making over. It is the custom of some women always to have a dress altered if it bears the stamp of last year's fashion.

Often the dress is very fresh, very becoming. But it is torn to pieces, and a second and revised edition produced, which ten chances to one is far less satisfactory than the first.

The plan is not a good one. No one cares to wear old-fashioned things. But if a costume is still new and fresh, and, above all, pretty and becoming, its effectiveness is in no wise impaired if the style does date from twelve months since.

There are cases enough where judicious making over may be practiced. By the way, the present style of mixing three and four materials in black costumes is very advantageous for making over.

One imported dress we have seen is of ottoman, with a very heavy rep, plain velvet, and a front of satin de Lyon brocaded in large pomegranates outlined in jet, and with large jet beads simulating the pomegranate seeds.

The trimming is Escuriel lace and ornaments of satin cords and jet. Simple costumes of black faille francaise and plain velvet are very frequent.

And what excellent opportunities this style offers for making over, every woman knows.

The cold has swept upon us so suddenly that furs have at once become objects of the first importance. A great run on astrakhan may be predicted for the winter. It is the most fashionable fur in Paris, being even used to make whole capotes and trimmings for bonnets, as well as trimmings for costumes.

The close curling Parisian lamb, both black and gray, is the handsomest, and is chiefly used.

But the smooth, wavy astrakhan, which is less expensive, also makes a pretty trimming.

Astrakhan cloth comes in for a share of popularity as it has a good effect, wears well and is reasonable in cost. For those wearing mourning no fur is so handsome as astrakhan.

On a black cloth suit it has a sober elegance, very attractive. On dark, blue, dark green, and dark brown, also on dark garnet cloth and elephant gray, it is stylish in black.

The gray Persian lamb has the best effect on sapphire blue cloth, or on "prune" cloth. Astrakhan is not, and never could be, a becoming fur. Hence some women will have nothing to do with it, fashionable though it may be.

They wear natural beaver, which is soft and becoming next the skin; or lynx, or chinchilla, or otter, or sealskin, which have the same advantage, also Russian hare, which is effective though inexpensive. Fur sets now consist of a cape, which reaches well to the elbows, and a small, very round muff.

Cuffs are less worn. Various sorts of fancy muffs will still be worn all through the winter, matching different suits. The satchel muffs of fur are especially stylish and pretty, as well as being extremely convenient for holding the handkerchief, portemonnaie, etc.

They are sealskin, otter, natural beaver, black martin, etc. Many very charming little jackets of jersey cloth, with a border and a collar and cuffs of astrakhan, are already being worn by young ladies. With a muff to match, and an astrakhan cap, or a cloth toque with a band of astrakhan around it, these little garments are most lady-like, and form an excellent choice for the entire winter.

Truly, one has cause to rejoice in the name of the artistic and suitable in dress, generally, that women now dress so sensibly and appropriately for the street. Dark colors, costumes of inconspicuous make, sober effects—these now reign supreme everywhere, and the house dress and street dress are kept quite apart. This is as it should be.

Let women attire themselves as gorgeously as they please indoors. Indeed, the more graceful and picturesque and warm in color their raiment the more beautiful will our homes be. But on foot in the street it is another matter.

A lady's dress then cannot be too plain, too quiet, too sober. Three or four years since American women were guilty of horrible breaches of taste in this matter. They never seemed to be able to learn, mark, and inwardly digest the difference between a costume which could only be worn in a carriage and one that would pass in a horse car.

Fireside Chat.

NOVELTIES IN DECORATION.

THE mania for painting everything does not seem to diminish in any degree, and the number of milking stools, flour and butter tubs, small dairy "cogs" stone harvest beer and whisky jars, bellows, frames, drain pipes and "splashers," seen at recent fancy bazars (where ladies' handiwork is fully displayed) is really astonishing.

The backs of toilet and long mirrors are now decorated, and this is advantageous when the window is close and the back of the glass is seen from without.

The fashionable device is one large spray of some showy flower, with leaves rising from the base and spreading upwards. A tendril is sometimes seen over the plain wood frame of the mirror, straying on to the glass.

The painting is in oils. Small three-legged cauldrons are particularly popular just now for painting on, and are to be seen on drawing-room and dining-room tables, with a growing fern or plant.

Some are gilded first, and then painted over with poppies, cherries, or arbutus berries; others are colored; and a few toned in shade like the Barbotine china. The prettiest size is about 5½in. in diameter, or a little larger.

House paint, to be had in small tins, would do for the first coat, as a good deal is used, but the flowers must be carried out in tube oils, when the surface is perfectly dry. A varnish afterwards is necessary.

Many skilful hands imitate the raised Barbotine china successfully with putty, fixed on with very strong glue, or with gutta-percha, and modeling wax, painted and moulded in the semblance of rough leaves and flowers.

A bunch of cherries and leaves on a pair of bellows, or a cluster of bursting chestnut pods on a flat "pilgrim" or whisky jar, is most effective, and not difficult to do. Leather work is also brought to bear on the subject.

Another novelty is the decorating of the brass water ewers seen so much on the Continent. They have lately been greatly used in bed rooms, in various sizes, as being more artistic-looking than the common jugs.

They are now being painted with wreaths of flowers, and placed in reception rooms as ornaments, with peacock feathers, grasses, or bullrushes lightly put in. Large white daisies and green leaves, poppies, and grasses are usually seen: but the designs are numerous, and open to individual taste and fancy.

There are six or seven sizes, and they vary in price. Brass preserving pans are also painted with a ring of flowers outside the rim, and filled with moss and ferns. If they are not filled, they are painted inside as well, and used as card baskets. The glazed delf milk pans can be painted in imitation of the blue willow pattern china, and also empty ginger jars.

Nothing looks better than to see yellow roses put en masse into these blue painted receptacles. The glazed surface is no drawback, as the oil paints lay on smoothly without any difficulty.

The decoration of dinner tables is constantly varying. Colored velvet and satin are no longer seen, but their place is taken by Madras clouded muslin, with colored flowers woven in, in subdued greens, blues, or pinks.

The strip is laid over the white cloth, and reaches almost to where the plates are. The ornaments, containing flowers and sweets are placed on it.

Sometimes a lace edge is sewn on; but more constantly a hem finishes it off all round. Flowers in their seasons are now used for decoration, and it is not considered essential to have hothouse flowers and maidenhair ferns.

In the spring, primroses or buttercups in old china bowls, with wild field grasses, are to be seen; in the summer, roses and all sorts of flowers; in the autumn, poppies, ox-eyed daisies, cornflowers, etc., in England; and in Scotland, masses of purple heather or the blue harebell. Grass may be occasionally the only decoration, and this is put in, a big bunch in a large glass globe in the centre of the table, and in smaller ones about.

The rich tints of strawberry and current leaves, touched by autumn, look exceedingly well with the many-colored single dahlias now so much in vogue. Small ferns, carefully lifted from damp, woodland soil, will live in water, in glasses, all the winter, and look fresh and green when floral decoration is at its lowest ebb. At a recent party, a very large Japanese umbrella formed a covering above the heads of the guests.

The long handle was fixed into a weight in the centre of the table, and partially concealed by ferns and tendrils. Fixed to the edge, at distances, were Chinese lanterns, and these afforded the necessary light.

The table was a round one, and the umbrella one of very large colored paper.

In many small drawing-rooms four colored glass lanterns are hung near the corners of the ceiling, instead of the orthodox centre light. If additional light is required candles, with shades, or lamps, are placed on small tables; but, as a rule, a dim atmosphere is aimed at.

This style usually goes with old-fashioned furniture, an old fireplace, dull-colored hangings, towering palms, and a heterogeneous collection of knick-knacks which drives the housemaid to distraction. Indian striped *dhurries* of red, blue, and white are now used in a variety of ways. They are to be seen as hall and staircase curtains, bath blankets, covers for the backs of sofas, mats, and portieres over draughty doors.

They are very coarse, warm, fast colored, and cheap, so command commendation. As curtains, they look well looped back with broad red velvet bands, or the gilt chains now so fashionable. The Syrian curtains are still very popular, and the last way of adapting them to windows is by mounting them on to a draw-string at the top and bottom of the window, and tying them in the centre with a large bow of ruby, peacock, or old-gold satin ribbon, hour-glass fashion.

Correspondence.

CHARLIE.—We advise you to write.

JOSEPHINE.—We cannot advise you in the matter.

P. B. F.—The cactus is a native of the tropical regions of America.

F. R. S.—Ellen means "fruitful," John "beloved of the Lord, grace favor."

TOM M.—In heathen mythology Mercury was the messenger of the gods, Hebe their cup-bearer.

I. W.—Apply to Peterson & Bro., publishers, Chestnut above Third. They have the book you want.

AMINA.—The expressions "strong as death," and "cruel as the grave," referring to love, occur in the "Song of Solomon."

READER.—The city of St. Louis is called the "Mound City" from the number of artificial mounds that originally occupied the site on which the city is built.

M. A. B.—Naphtha, ether, oil of turpentine, benzol, and many other substances, dissolve india-rubber to its natural condition. Great care should be used in handling such inflammable liquids.

SIMPLICITY.—Such marriages are not usually advisable, but your case, as the gentleman seems passionately attached to you, may be an exception. All depends on the strength of his affection for you.

N. L.—If you look in your back numbers of the POST you will find the answer to it. 2. She is still living in England, but where we cannot say. Possibly a letter addressed to her at the London post-office would reach her.

MARGARITA.—If you see clearly that you have become an object of especial regard to the gentleman, and do not wish to encourage his addresses, treat him honorably and humanely, as you hope to be used by the person who may engage your heart.

FLORENCE M.—Unless we saw your nose we cannot tell what is the cause of its enlargement. It may proceed from local causes, and therefore be made to yield to proper treatment, or it may arise from some constitutional and chronic malady, and therefore be incurable.

OCTAVIA.—The young man would no doubt make a good husband, but he is too young yet to marry. If he is of no trade or profession how is he to support a wife? But as your parents encourage his visits, we may suppose that his future prospects are satisfactory to them.

A. M. B.—You should not offer any explanation, as you have done nothing improper. Very young men are apt to be jealous without cause. If your admirer desired to monopolize your society, he should have proposed marriage. Do not be impatient. He will return and seek your favor.

LEMUEL.—Wedding-visits must be returned during the course of a few days, and parties are generally made for the new-married couple, which they are expected to return. This does not, however, entail much visiting; neither is it expected from young people whose resources may be limited, or when the husband has to make his way in the world.

MATER.—Children born in ancient Greece were named upon the seventh day; birthday feasts appear to have been usual. Lacedæmonian nurses were much sought after by wealthy Grecians, because they had the reputation of bringing up children without swaddling clothes, and making the boys hardy and courageous. Cradles were used for the infants, just as they are now, and the babies were quieted with honey, much as our noisy little ones are bribed with sugar.

FRED.—If the young lady is really "nice," and the sort of girl whom a good man would wish to marry, she is not likely to be pleased by any advances from an admirer of an abrupt or unusual kind. Make the acquaintance of the young lady's friends; find out where you are likely to meet her; so far as possible get to be one of her "set;" in this way you will be able to see enough of her to judge whether she likes your society, and what hope there will be for you when you ask the final question.

SUFFERER.—There is no relief to be got in mere seclusion or idleness. Try methodical work—that is, quiet reading—of not more than half an hour's duration at stated periods of the day, and employ the intervals as far as possible in reflection on what has been read. The aim must be to restore order in the working of the brain by a regular discipline of exercise, just as you would get up the strength of your muscles by training. If this is not explicit, write again; but try the plan suggested for a month. If the brain is healthy, you need not fear the issue.

G. R. M.—The pulse certainly varies with age, but nothing certain can be inferred from the number of beats per minute taken alone. This must be considered in relation to the number of respirations per minute, and the character of the latter. It is impossible to form an opinion in reference to any particular case without careful examination of the physical signs. Do not be influenced in any way by what you read. The paragraph you quote is much too dogmatic in its style. It must be written by a young man—that is, young in the sense of being inexperienced. No old physician would write thus. Consult some qualified and respectable practitioner, and ask him to examine you carefully, and tell you whether there is anything amiss. The so-called remedy to which you allude is not to be trusted.

C. C. C.—Krishna is one of the Hindu divinities. He is, or was, an incarnate deity of wonderful beauty. The legend is that King Kanza, being informed that a child of the family of Devaci would overturn his throne, gave orders to destroy all the male infants that were born. When Krishna was born his nurse attempted to poison him but failed. The mother fled with her child and both were found and taken care of by a shepherd. As he grew his beauty was so divine that all the princesses of Hindustan fell in love with him, and even to the present day he is the Apollo of India, and the idol of East Indian women. 2. St. Crispin's holiday is every Monday with those who begin the working week with Tuesday. With shoemakers every no-work day is a St. Crispin's holiday. 3. "Paddle your own canoe" means to mind your own business. To "Tote your own skillet" means to think and act for yourself.